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A MARITAL LIABILITY.

CHAPTER I.

"IF I could ever feel it possible to regret the departure of a gentleman from this institution, I might say now that I am very sorry indeed to have you leave us, Mr. Van Vorst."

"Thank you, warden. I may also say that if ever prisoner had reason to become attached to his jail and to his keeper, I am that prisoner."

The warden, gazing with those keen, penetrating eyes which were such able appraisers of human ware at the man whose hand he held, perceived far more in the lined and worn face than we, mere casual observers, could possibly discover.

We, strangers to the tragic events of the prisoner's career, see in him merely a man in the early prime of life, a gentleman unmistakably; tall, but with a slight stoop in his shoulders that makes his height seem less than it really is; slender of build, unnaturally white of skin, with fairly regular features, hazel eyes, intent and introspective of expression, a clean-shaven face, and short, crisp hair which nature would still have dyed nearly black, but which artificial conditions of existence have so bleached that white largely predominates over its original coloring. The chief suggestion conveyed by the face is that of mental suffering, and between the distinctly marked eyebrows are grooved two short, perpendicular lines which indicate an habitual contraction of the brow.

But the warden, for ten years Murray Van Vorst's sole friend and intimate, divined more meaning in the various features of his personality than is revealed to us.

For instance, he observed that the stoop of the shoulders was more marked than usual, and this signified to him an uncommon degree of mental depression; he saw that the always pale complexion had lost

even that faint indication of strong vitality and the virility of manhood yet in its prime which ordinarily gave at least the appearance of health to his ward ; and from this peculiar pallor he concluded that the man was unnerved and almost frightened by the necessity of confronting the exigencies of recovered liberty. In the dark eyes, eyes which, despite the fact that they were those of a man who had just completed a sentence of ten years' imprisonment for an offence of which it was proved beyond the shadow of doubt that he was guilty, nevertheless were straightforward and honest in expression and had never furtively evaded the gaze of others,—in these eyes he read despair, despondency, hopelessness, indecision, almost a longing to retreat before the prospect of a freedom which lacked all the essential conditions that make liberty worth the having.

Observing these various indications, and being sincerely attached to his late prisoner, the warden sought to cheer him by presenting to his consideration the few bright aspects of his case.

“ You *were* that criminal, you should say, sir,” he replied to the other’s remark. “ You *are* a criminal no longer. You are as guiltless to-day as I or any man you may chance to meet. You have paid off your debt ; the old account is closed, and you are at liberty to open a new one with life in any part of the world you may select. You are still a young man, strong, wealthy, with a future before you, and with the past, thank God, behind your back.”

Murray Van Vorst returned the warden’s kindly glance with a look of grim dissent.

“ With the past, you mean, stalking like a black shadow by my side,” he corrected. “ The more brightly the sun of prosperity may chance to shine upon me, the more pronounced that shadow will become.”

The warden felt the truth of the statement, but it did not harmonize with his *métier* of cheery counsellor to coincide with it.

“ Not necessarily, sir,” he said. “ A gentleman with all your advantages of birth and fortune may make his own figure so prominent and attractive that no one will have eyes for any shadow that may lurk near him. It will be a simple matter for you to come out of the retirement in which you have so long lived and find a cordial welcome awaiting you in the world.”

A brief flash of scorn shot from Van Vorst’s hazel eyes. He gave a heart-sick laugh.

“ Oh, for God’s sake, warden, be honest !” he exclaimed. “ Say what you mean in plain language. I am no longer sensitive, you know. Prison discipline, even though it be as kindly as yours, cures all that sort of thing. A thief, if he is rich and well-born, may come out from ten years’ incarceration, you mean, and find sycophants of not over-scrupulous character, willing to condone his past out of consideration for his money. Isn’t that your real meaning ?”

The straightforward penetration of his glance caused the well-disposed warden to drop his eyes. Van Vorst had, indeed, voiced his idea exactly, but, so expressed, it certainly fell short of its mark, which was to comfort and encourage a failing heart.

"Well—not precisely—that is—" he stammered, miserably at a loss to make intent tally with honesty. His companion rescued him from his embarrassment by interruption.

"All right!" he broke in, gratefully; "I understand. You're a good fellow, warden, and I quite appreciate your efforts to make me feel that being set at liberty involves all sorts of joyous possibilities. It isn't your fault if I cannot respond in proper fashion. But I can't. If there were one living soul looking for my return to the world, counting upon my release, anticipating it as a means of increasing its own happiness, it might save the situation in my eyes. As it is, how is it? That sounds like one of those involved conundrums, doesn't it? Well, the analogy holds. My condition is an involved conundrum. I am a married man, and yet I have no wife, nor is my wife dead. I am a father, but I have no child, and yet my daughter is living. I am a rich man, a very rich man, even in these days when to be rich means to be possessed of what our grandfathers would have called fabulous wealth, and yet, God knows, a more poverty-stricken wretch does not exist to-day in all America than I."

His eyes looked forth so haggardly from between their bent and furrowed brows, his voice was so deep and hoarse with the pent-up feelings which nearly choked him, and his face had grown so fearfully white and rigid, that a man's one idea of restoration took immediate possession of the warden. He went hastily toward a cabinet that stood in a corner of his private office, and took out a decanter and glass. He filled the latter and offered it to Van Vorst.

"Here, sir," he said, employing a casual manner at variance with his deeply stirred sympathies, "you must drink to a brighter future than that you anticipate."

Van Vorst took the glass with eager fingers and drained its contents. The stimulant was welcome to him, for no living soul could conceive, unless, indeed, it were one that had passed through similar vicissitudes, what agony of mind, what a terrible loss of will-power, what a cowardly shrinking from action, had suddenly laid hold upon him. The spirit partially braced him up, but he felt a craving for a brief reprieve before closing behind his reluctant form those doors which had so long sheltered him from public notice.

"Thank you, warden," he exclaimed, and hesitated. He knew that there was nothing more to be said, that the warden had done all in his power to facilitate and render easy his departure, and that it was expected that that departure should now take place. And yet he hesitated.

It seems inconceivable that one should cling to chains which have constrained and galled one; that one should come to desire the replacement of shackles which have cut deep and agonizing wounds into sensitive and quivering flesh; that one should, of his own accord, cleave to an environment which his soul has loathed and his spirit spurned; that one should feel homesick longing and regret for walls which have shut all wholesome light and warmth from his life. Yet, nevertheless, Murray Van Vorst, in that dull and gloomy prison office, a free man for the first time in ten endless years, was acutely conscious that this

sickly yearning for protracted residence within that hapless asylum was the one overwhelming sentiment that possessed him, of which he was ashamed, and yet to which he felt obliged, perforce, to yield for a short time, at least.

"Warden," he said, with a shame-faced smile, "let me sit here in your room a few minutes, will you? You need not bother about me. Go ahead and do anything you want to; but if I may just sit here a little while I shall be much obliged to you."

Much experience had familiarized the warden with this very reluctance that Van Vorst was exhibiting.

"Of course," he assented, good-naturedly, and as if the request were a most natural one. "Stay as long as you like. There is only your train to be thought of."

The other made a gesture as if dismissing so trivial a consideration.

"Another will do as well," he replied. "I am not pressed for time, you know. Indeed, I shall find some difficulty, I imagine, in disposing of that I have on hand."

At that moment some one knocked on the door. The warden's "Come in" was followed by the entrance of a turnkey.

"A lady and gentleman are here, sir, with a special permit to see No. 849," he announced. "Shall I show them in here?"

The warden nodded. The turnkey disappeared, and the warden turned to his guest.

"You can take a seat behind that desk, sir," he said. "The interview will be a short one. You will not be seen at all."

Van Vorst complied with the suggestion. The desk was high, and quite concealed him from observation. He had just seated himself, when the door again opened and the turnkey reappeared, ushering in the visitors to No. 849.

The warden addressed them in courteous tones, and then, expecting to hear a man's voice in reply, Van Vorst was surprised by the sweet, long-unfamiliar treble of a woman's cultivated accents.

"It is I who have come to see the prisoner, sir; she was my seamstress, and I have always been deeply interested in her. My cousin has accompanied me simply as escort."

The voice was fresh and musical, and characterized by a charming sincerity and geniality. The lady, without doubt, was young.

"Your interest has outlived the discovery of the woman's guilt," the warden suggested.

There was a moment's pause; then the frank tones responded,—

"I have never felt assured of her guilt, sir." The reply was accompanied by a certain gravity and decision that showed the speaker had weighed the matter seriously in her own mind and had formed her opinion deliberately.

"Perhaps you were not wholly apprised of the facts in the case," the warden suggested.

"I was closely associated with the theft," the girl replied. "It was from my dressing-table that the money was stolen."

There was apparent astonishment in the warden's next remark.

"And yet you feel doubtful of the prisoner's guilt?" he exclaimed. "Pardon me; I have forgotten the details of the case, but I thought it was you, her mistress, who caused her arrest."

"No, not I; my mother."

Although both tone and words were filially respectful, they were marked by strong dissent and divergence from the maternal decision. Up to this moment the man who had accompanied the girl had remained silent; now he spoke.

"I imagine there was really not much doubt of her guilt, warden," he said, in the somewhat self-important manner of youth that forms conclusions for itself of so decided and hasty a character that age contemplates with astonishment a quickly framed dogmatism which experience has taught it to distrust and discard on its own account; "but my cousin refuses to allow herself to be convinced of it. She has a superb faith in her species."

Although the tone and accent were a bit consequential and superior, yet they were pleasant and attractive, and prepossessed one in favor of the speaker. Apparently he was a bright, cheery young fellow, with whom the world had wagged so well that adversity had never shaken his calm confidence in his own judgment. But his remark evidently somewhat nettled his companion. The melody of her utterance was not quite tuneful as she rejoined,—

"You should not say that, Stephen. I do not refuse to allow myself to be convinced; I am not so foolish as that, I hope. I am, and always have been, open to conviction in this affair; but Martha's guilt must be proved by evidence which I consider unimpeachable, before I will credit it."

"Your mother—" began the young fellow, hastily. But the girl interrupted him:

"My mother, doubtless, fully believes in her own statement that, as she paused outside the door, she heard Martha cross the floor, open and shut the drawer stealthily, and return to her seat in the next room. But I have known my mother to be mistaken many times, and never, in all my life, have I known Martha to deviate in the slightest particular from the—from fact. However, all this is beside the present business. I have a favor to ask of you, warden: it is that I may see poor Martha here and not go to her cell. I fancy she would rather die than have me witness her actual degradation."

The warden hesitated, demurring a little at the request. His glance rested on the bit of paper, the special permit, which the turnkey had given him and which he held in his hand.

"Well," he returned, presently, with a yielding glance at his fair petitioner, "it is a somewhat irregular proceeding, Miss Yorke, but your permit calls for a certain relaxation of the rules. I shall have to ask you to give me your word of honor that you will in no way take advantage of the indulgence shown you."

"You have my promise. Thank you.—Steenie, may I see her alone, please? Your presence will embarrass her."

"Or hers embarrass me," the young man laughed. "I fancy, of the two, she is the more hardened individual. Criminals are not tra-

ditionally thin-skinned ; eh, warden ? Oh, I say, Sylvia, I beg pardon. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, dear."

There was honest regret in his voice. Evidently, though he might be somewhat careless and consequential, Stephen Lennox would never be deliberately cruel ; certainly not to his cousin, Sylvia Yorke.

"Mr. Lennox might like to go through the jail with me," the warden suggested.

"Thanks, I should. I have never seen an aviary on so large a scale," Lennox replied, with an ill-timed attempt at humor.

Probably the girl's sensitive nerves were too tense at that moment to bear even the smallest unnecessary strain upon them, for she turned quite hotly upon him. "When you feel like making a jest upon such sad reality as this, Stephen," she ejaculated, in a low tone of reproof, "you might choose a better audience than a gentleman whose charge you are making sport of, and a girl whose most sacred feelings you are torturing.—Now, sir," she continued, turning to the warden, "when-ever you are ready."

The warden bowed. He was much impressed by his visitor. It seemed to him that he had never seen a girl who combined so many admirable feminine attributes as she. Beauty, dignity, sensibility, warm-heartedness, and great charm of manner were hers, and although obviously a darling of Fortune, for her dress and appointments indicated a free command of wealth, yet she was as frank and simple as a child. But one thing about her aroused his criticism : he thought her sensitiveness concerning her servant somewhat excessive. Still, girls are frequently prone to ardent and enthusiastic championships. Yet —her most sacred feelings ! H'm ! well, well — He glanced at Lennox and moved toward the door.

"If you will follow me, sir," he said.

The young man took advantage of the warden's back being turned to make a hasty apology to his cousin. Grasping her hand, he pressed it hard between his own.

"Oh, Sylvia, Sylvia darling," he whispered, "you know I forgot all about that. I would die, dearest, rather than make light of that. Forgive me, dear ; will you —won't you?"

The girl smiled, and the pained, reproachful look quite faded from her eyes. It was apparent that she could not long regard the young fellow harshly.

"Yes," she said. "But, Steenie, how could you forget ?—Now go, quick. See, the warden is looking."

She gave his fingers a little squeeze, and turned toward a table, as if she were more interested in the books that lay upon it than in the passionate warmth that had filled Stephen's eyes. The two men disappeared, and the door closed behind them.

Meanwhile, all recollection of the other occupant of the room had been chased from the good warden's mind by fresh interests and considerations. Yet there had been enacted a little scene with a single player, a still and speechless pantomime of varied emotions and almost tragic intensity, behind that tall desk which sheltered a man who had been transformed within an hour from a mere scheduled number to an

individual destined to become again a person of consequence and distinction in the world of finance and fashion. Murray Van Vorst, lately No. 757 upon the books of the institution which still sheltered him, and upon which he was loath to turn his back, had sat quite still during the earlier portion of the interview, listening indifferently to the conversation, but emotionally somewhat disturbed by the long-unfamiliar music of a refined female voice. He lay back in his comfortable chair with closed eyes, enjoying to the full that first suggestion of what re-entrance into the world might mean to him.

Prior to his imprisonment, far back in those dimly remembered days in which his share of action had grown in retrospect to seem but a fancied participation in an unreal romance, he had been keenly alive to the pleasures of the senses. Beauty, melody, grace, good living, art in all its manifestations, the friendship of men, the society of women, all had been part and parcel of his life. It had never occurred to him that in being freely permitted the enjoyment of all these good things he was singled out by Fortune as one of a select few from a vast crowd of less favored individuals. They were his birthright; why should he have thought their bestowal in any way exceptional, or have felt the wisdom of making the most of them while they were yet his? But he had lost them. They had slipped—no, they had been wrenched from his grasp. For ten years they were to him as though they had never been; and yet not so, exactly, for their memory lingered behind to tantalize and harass those awful periods of despair when he felt but one impulse constraining him, to curse God and die.

He had been allowed (for within a couple of years after receiving his sentence he had fallen heir to great wealth, and a golden pass-key possesses magic powers over almost all circumstances) certain ameliorations of the usual prison conditions; but, being somewhat strangely natured, the incongruity of luxury and penal servitude so revolted him that he did not choose to avail himself largely of exceptional privileges. He had preferred a complete submission to the letter and spirit of his sentence to a useless attempt to reconcile himself to it by seeking to mitigate its severity by the accretion of creature comforts.

He had believed that ten years of disuse had dulled and blunted his senses, had rendered them unappreciative of those things which formerly had ministered to them. He had not calculated upon still being possessed of the ability to derive pleasure from such sources as men of his age usually find productive of gratification. Forty years of active life could not have so robbed him of the capacity for enjoyment as had that one decade of enforced inertia. And yet, notwithstanding all these well-grounded and sincere convictions, the soft, melodious accents of the first feminine voice that had smitten his ears since prison doors were unlocked to him set all his soul atremble with delight that was well-nigh rapture. Long-vanished experience made to vibrate within him a chord that was set in the key of Hope, that suggested unimagined possibilities of freedom, that caused jubilantly to echo in his soul the warden's remark that he had not yet passed far beyond the meridian of life. At forty-two the sun is still high in the heavens, no

chill of winter foretells decay, the vigor and powers of manhood should be at their best. At forty-two, yes; but at eighty-two! And that, in the despondent reaction of the next moment, Van Vorst felt to be his actual age. What concern was it to the decrepitude of an octogenarian that there were youth and beauty and female loveliness yet in the world?

His heart sank again within him at the alertness in the young man's voice when he took up the thread of discourse. It suggested a wide gulf, which seemed to the listener impossible of abridgment, between a life exhausted of anticipation and youth teeming with possibilities. The faint flush that had crept over his face faded, and left behind it a pallor even grayer than before. Again the hazel eyes recovered their wonted expression of forlorn unexpectancy. It was probable, judging from the lack of animation in his face, that his mind had strayed from its occupation with the affairs of these strangers and had harked back to its own grievous condition. There was no indication of interest or attention in either face or manner; both were marked by apathy and mere passive dejection. He might have slept, for any evidence he gave to the contrary. He presented a sad and moving spectacle of strong manhood and powerful ability crushed to earth beneath the overwhelming weight of adverse circumstance. It was obvious that, whether or not he had deserved the stroke that had cleft his life in twain, he had suffered under it as only strong natures can suffer.

All at once, however, it was as if that comfortable chair in which he appeared to be reposing at his ease had been connected with an invisible magnetic battery, of which a mischievous hand had turned on the current. So suddenly Van Vorst started, so swift a change passed over him, that one would have thought nothing less potent than a galvanic shock could have produced so tremendous an effect. This happened at the moment when the warden, with one eye on the bit of introductory paper in his hand, addressed his interesting guest by name.

The man sitting behind the desk, with his hands gripping the extreme ends of the chair-arms, held his breath. Yorke! Yorke! He had good reason to know that name. None had been more closely associated with his life. With every nerve quivering, with every sense at attention, he hung upon the edge of the seat, straining his hearing for more evidence that should either confirm or disprove the possibilities suggested. And soon it came.

The girl's reply, and the request made to her cousin, the young man's flippant reflection upon the calloused sensibilities of that class to which he, Van Vorst, had so recently belonged, passed almost unobserved, certainly unheeded, over his head. Then came the young fellow's swift apology,—“Oh, I say, Sylvia, I beg pardon,”—and then conviction, swift and absolute.

Good God! was it not an easy matter to link those four syllables together? Sylvia Yorke! There should have been others added, but he was well aware for what reason they were missing. He fell back again in his chair, and covered his face with his slender, well-bred hands, while, at intervals, long shivers shook his bowed frame. He was not ready—no, he was far from ready—for a re-entrance into the world.

He had not half considered with what heart-rending difficulties that return bristled, with what sharp thorns his future course must be set.

Sylvia Yorke! His own heart added the missing syllables, for it had never contemplated the name dismembered from its original form, and it was a new torture to him so to consider it. Then an impulse, born of a great, a long-felt yearning, assailed him,—to look upon her, to see what manner of woman she had become, to feast his eyes upon the full development of features whose childish beauty he had known far better than his own face.

He rose softly, stealthily, as a guilty eavesdropper might have done, and lifted his head above the top of the desk. There they stood, the trio to whose conversation he had been idly listening, little suspecting what interest it might hold for him. Their backs were turned to him, and it was an easy matter to accomplish his purpose undetected. But he trembled and shook as he stood there, so violently that it became necessary to steady himself by the support of the heavy oak desk.

The girl, as I have said, was turned from him, but her profile was in full view; and to this and to her tall, slender young form the man's eyes clung with that greedy and tenacious gaze with which a half-starved brute contemplates that which would satisfy its gnawing hunger.

Sylvia Yorke was, without doubt, a pretty girl. There were some, indeed, like Stephen Lennox and a few others, who went further and called her beautiful. But these were especially interested persons, and so partial critics, whose own vision was largely responsible for that exceptional degree of beauty which they claimed to discover in a low, smooth brow, a pair of blue eyes that were capable of a variety of expressions, fair, fresh coloring, and an exceedingly sweet and tender mouth. The dark hair that was taken smoothly back from either side the pure forehead was remarkable neither for color nor luxuriance; the eyes, candid, honest, and rather intent in their gaze, were neither abnormally large nor wonderful in hue; the nose and other features had neither perfection of form nor regularity of design; they were well enough, and went to the making up of just such a girl as you like to meet in your daily walks,—a fresh, breezy, wholesome young creature, sound of mind and body, but no goddess, mark you, nor, for the matter of that, any great exception to her kind in a land and an age which are producing a very excellent and commendable type of young womanhood as a characteristic of nineteenth century development.

But it would have been hard to convince Murray Van Vorst that such was the case, as he stood clinging to his vantage-point, feasting his eyes upon what seemed to him a marvel of rare girlish beauty. Had you, being more accustomed to the type and familiar with numerous specimens of it, offered to wager that you could show many another sample as admirable in all respects as Sylvia, I do not doubt that, under the thrall of his recently kindled amazement and adoration, Van Vorst would have backed his own opinion to the contrary with half his fortune; which would have shown no mean confidence in Sylvia Yorke's exceptional endowments.

There was something terrible, something heart-rending, in the

man's look and attitude as he stood there, never moving his eyes from the girl, who pursued her conversation quite unconscious of that absorbing scrutiny. There was so much expressed in his concentrated gaze!—such a vivid realization of the awful loss he had sustained in his ten years' exile from life and all its manifold interests and attachments; such a consciousness of the impossibility of ever recovering that vast extent of lost ground; such a keen comprehension of the fact that that sentence of death-in-life imposed upon him for a criminal breach of trust had further-reaching consequences than could be included in a mere fixed span of years, consequences which extended far into the future and spread their poison over the entire remainder of his life! There was the agony of a newly awakened sense of all he had renounced when his prison doors closed upon him and shut him out forever from the natural affiliations of existence; there were despair, regret, longing, tenderness, sadness unutterable, and there was, besides, another quality hard to define exactly,—an expression that seemed to convey a suggestion of fierce self-blame, of self-condemnation, you might say, for having needlessly forfeited the close and intimate companionship, for having sacrificed without gain the high and loving regard, of this fair and generous-minded young creature. The punishment of Murray Van Vorst had never so excruciated him as in that moment. If the aim and intent of that sentence of Justice, which he had within the hour fulfilled, were retribution, then in that brief interval, more than in the whole term of his imprisonment, was its purpose accomplished.

Suddenly he was recalled to a recollection of his position. The interview had ended. The two men were moving toward the door; the girl had turned, and might easily perceive him. One instant, recklessness and long abnegation got the better of prudence, and urged that he allow himself to be discovered; then self-discipline prevailed over indiscretion, and he fell back and dropped again into the chair behind him.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW moments passed in unbroken silence. The man was busy with his own thoughts; the girl also. Presently the door opened and a turnkey ushered into the room a woman, at sight of whom Sylvia gave a little eager cry of welcome, moving swiftly forward with extended hands.

No. 849 was a tall, gaunt Scotchwoman, angular and rugged in form and feature. Her face was thin, and the freckles upon it were as numerous as stars in the heavens upon a clear night. Her high cheek-bones protruded above the hollows they overshadowed, like mountain-ridges sheltering deep valleys. There was scarcely any curve to the almost perfectly straight line of her lips, and when these parted they disclosed large, strong teeth of a slightly yellowish cast. The upper lip was shadowed by a considerable growth of sandy hair, and a large mole upon her chin was likewise adorned with a hirsute crop.

The hair was scant and sandy, and the thick eyebrows were so much darker as to be almost, if not quite, red.

Yet, unbeautiful and somewhat harsh though Martha Melton's face was, it was by no means repulsive or forbidding. There was a straightforwardness, a simplicity, a childlike candor in the light gray eyes, which one seldom encounters in the face of maturity, and which suggested kindliness of disposition and inexperience of the world.

As Sylvia Yorke sprang forward to greet her, the old woman's face reddened, her lip trembled, and she drew back a little, clasping her hands significantly behind her. The turnkey had withdrawn, and the two women, unaware of a hidden presence, believed themselves to be the sole occupants of the room.

"I canna tak' yer han', Miss Sylvie," Martha said, with a strong native accent. "Ye'll be thinkin' I'm a creeminal, an' it's no' seemly for ye to shak' han's wi' sic an one."

But the girl, with a charming, wilful gesture, stretched out her arms and unclasped the bony fingers, drawing them forward and holding them in an affectionate grasp while she spoke.

"Martha," she exclaimed, looking her companion deliberately in the eyes, with a warm, affectionate light in her own, "you know I am thinking nothing of the kind. I have always believed you innocent, and now I have come here for you to confirm my belief."

Her voice was grave, almost solemn, yet tender withal, and the woman she addressed again drew a little away from her, with a frightened look in her eyes that might have strengthened suspicion of her guilt. But suspicion cannot increase unless it already exists, and suspicion of Martha Melton's integrity had never been begotten in the breast of her young mistress.

"Eh, Miss Sylvie, I canna do yon," she said, with a discouraging shake of her head. "I wad hae been a free woman the day an I could."

The girl drew her toward a chair, placing one for herself close beside it. She sat down, and motioned her companion to do the same.

"Sit there, Martha," she said. "I want to talk to you a little."

The woman obeyed, but reluctantly. Sylvia continued :

"You are wrong when you think you cannot thoroughly clear yourself in my eyes, although you might not be able to do it in the sight of the law. You see, you are not the stranger to me you are to Justice. I have never believed in your guilt, and a simple denial of it is all I require to confirm my faith in your innocence. This denial I want you to give me now, face to face."

A purple flush crimsoned the woman's hard-favored countenance, and her eyes became suffused with tears. She had served this girl from the time when the garments her uncouth fingers had fashioned for her had been of doll-like proportions, and no one could imagine how fondly she loved her, and what such confidence and trust meant to her outraged soul in this its darkest hour.

They say that the consciousness of innocence is a staff in time of false accusation ; but it is assuredly a rather inadequate prop, liable to

give way frequently beneath the heavy burden of unjust oppression which it is supposed so excellently to support. Martha Melton had put its worth to the test, and it had scarcely vindicated its reputation. Her spirit was lame and sore from the many occasions upon which it had fallen prostrate notwithstanding the fact that it had been possessed of this crutch.

She bent forward now, with her hands clasping the arms of the chair, and returned, measure for measure, the open, candid, honest look with which Sylvia was regarding her.

"Ye're no' wrang in yer joodgments, Miss Sylvie," she said, simply. "I never laid eyes on the money."

The girl nodded her head in calm acceptance of a fact of which she had always felt assured.

"I knew it, Martha," she replied; then, noticing a look of perplexity in the other's face, she continued, "What is it? Something troubles you."

The woman nodded. "Ay," she answered. "I hae been sair puzzled, Miss Sylvie. I never had thocht Joostice could miscarry."

The infallibility of state institutions is a matter of sacred belief with the majority of honest, unsophisticated minds. A very serious, thoughtful expression settled over the fair young countenance on which her questioning gaze was bent. There was a short pause, and then, in a low, clear tone, Sylvia Yorke replied,—

"But I knew that it could, long ago, Martha. You know how fatally it erred in that other case."

A sudden interruption here created a diversion that was most welcome to the old Scotchwoman. Her own convictions upon the subject to which the girl alluded were of a wholly opposite nature from what Sylvia assumed them to be. It would have embarrassed her sincerity and affection to have been obliged to respond.

"What was yon?" she exclaimed, looking searchingly about the room. "Didna ye hear a noise, Miss Sylvie?"

"Yes," the girl replied. "I thought some one spoke my name, very softly." She listened a moment, turning her head about so as to visit every corner of the apartment with her glance. "There is no one here," she went on. "It was probably some one speaking outside, —the officials, perhaps. Time is precious, Martha, and we must make the most of it. Now, I want you to help me discover the real thief. I am sure I could do it. Money does not walk out of a drawer of its own accord. Some one stole that five hundred dollars, and I am going to find out who it is. I am determined that no one I am fond of shall ever again endure an unjust sentence, if I can help it. I shall make it my business to hunt down that thief and release you, even if it should prove to be the person I love best in all the world."

The woman she was confronting rose hastily from her seat. Her homely face was working in great agitation; her hands twitched nervously. It was obvious that she was under the spell of some strong emotion. There was even a look of affright in her eyes.

"Eh, gi' ower, noo; gi' ower, Miss Sylvie," she cried, half coaxingly, half imploringly. "It's no' fitting for a young leddy like you

to fash yersel wi' sic a maitter. Let it bide ; I'm no' sae uncoomfortable here. A body maun e'en dree his weird, ye ken."

Sylvia looked up at her in surprise not unmixed with scorn, as she, too, rose from her seat.

"Dree his weird!" she cried, passionately contemptuous, tossing her pretty head loftily back, while her eyes flamed with indignation and dissent. "That means succumb to his fate, doesn't it, Martha? Well, that's what a man or woman must do if no one is at hand to rescue them. That is what one man I have known has been obliged to do, because there was no one belonging to him devoted enough to stand by him and save him from rank injustice. I will never allow another human being of my acquaintance to 'dree' such a 'weird' again, if I can help it: mind that, my good Martha. Do you think I can go home to-night and sleep calmly and comfortably, knowing that you are 'dreeing' an abominable and outrageous 'weird,' as you call it, in this horrible place? Don't talk to me about your 'weirds,' Martha. The name is enough to give one the cold shivers. You shall never 'dree' any of them with my consent."

She laughed at her own simple humor, but at the same time she took the woman's rough hands in hers and leaned forward to kiss her cheek.

"Now, Martha," she continued, unconsciously mingling with the affectionate warmth of her voice a little of the authority of the mistress, "tell me all you know about the business. I have always felt that you suspected some one. Who was it?"

A Scottish characteristic manifested itself in the old woman's manner, as she replied. It was obvious that she could be as stubborn as her young mistress was persuasive.

"I hae nae suspeecion, Miss Sylvie," she answered. "Na, I hae nae."

It is sad to be obliged to record the fact that here our otherwise admirable heroine stamped her little foot in angry impatience.

"Oh, Martha," she cried, "you are becoming contaminated by your surroundings. You used to be a truthful woman."

Martha smiled grimly and spoke soothingly.

"Noo, noo, Miss Sylvie, dinna fash yersel' wi' an auld body like me," she said. "Beautiful young leddies hae ither consairns mair important. Whist! Hark, noo. Hoo's Maister Steenie, an' do you be let see him as you wull, these days?—or does the ban still bide, dearie?"

The girl's face flushed and softened. It seemed that Martha in certain matters mingled the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, for it was plain that by a simple stratagem she had gained her point of evading the question.

"I am afraid the ban still bides, Martha. Mamma is scarcely civil to him now. But I am not a wholly obedient girl, as you know. I must and will see Steenie, and no one shall prevent it."

Her lips, delicate, tender lips though they were, settled into an expression of firm resolution. It was easy to read decision of character in the lower part of the face; but the earnest eyes showed less confi-

dence in their own ability to confront opposition. There was a look of apprehension in their depths, a suggestion of terror in the contemplation of possible consequences.

The old woman patted her hand encouragingly.

"Aweel, aweel, my bairnie," she said, "dinna let them coom ower ye. Haud to Steenie. He's a bonnie lad; an', gin ye lo' him, haud fast till him."

The girl's fair face became rarely lovely then, as deeply stirred emotion dyed it with an exquisite blush, which stole out from under the dark hair that waved back from the low brow and spread to the tip of the chin that nestled in the fur which edged her outer garment. There was no misconstruing the nature of the emotion that provoked it, nor was it possible to mistake the expression of the softly beaming eyes, burning with the gentle but fervent radiance of passionate affection.

"If I love him!" she repeated. "If I love Steenie, Martha!" She gave a low laugh. "If I breathe, if I live, if I can see, think, feel, remember, anticipate, enjoy, appreciate anything in this whole world, then I love Steenie! If not, if you think me a dull blockhead, an empty-minded and heartless little fool, incapable of experiencing any of these emotions, then, and only then, doubt of my love for him may exist in your mind."

Murray Van Vorst, who had again risen from his chair, and was gazing in rapt contemplation at the charming young creature who stood palpitating and glowing with the ardor and devotion of a maiden's first passion, experienced a jealous pang as her fervent rejoinder fell upon his ear. He would have had that girlish heart as yet a blank page; and yet to what end, since it was denied him to write his own name, even in small characters, thereon?

The wily Scotchwoman had attained her purpose of diverting the drift of the conversation from dangerous shoals. She was not skilled in parrying direct attack, but she was more or less adroit in manœuvre. Through long association and deep attachment, she had become in a measure the confidante of the girl whom she had served from infancy; for, numerous as were the members of Mrs. Yorke's establishment and extensive as was her visiting-list, neither establishment nor visiting-list furnished a sufficiency of individuals of such characteristics as were congenial to her daughter, from among whom Sylvia might select one as the special repository of her most intimate thoughts and experiences. And so it had come about that Martha Melton, the seamstress of the household, sitting in her little sewing-room off Sylvia's chamber, had come to know more of the girl's inner life, of her sorrows, joys, disappointments, emotions, apprehensions, and anticipations, than perhaps any one else in all the world.

She had grown to merge her own existence in that of her young mistress; to make the girl's interests hers; to share her troubles and participate vicariously in her pleasures; to grieve when she mourned, and to rejoice when she found cause for happiness. On one point alone, influenced by a childlike faith in the omniscience and infallibility of official institutions, which had never wavered until she herself had fallen victim to an error of justice, had she been at issue with Sylvia's

conclusions. But, knowing how intense and loyal, how unswerving and intolerant of contradiction, was the girl's faith in this conviction, she had wisely remained passively quiescent when the subject was uppermost, refraining from troubling her young mistress's comfortable belief by a demonstration of her own contrary opinion.

She smiled inwardly, now, as she saw how successful her lure had been. Doubt of Sylvia's love for her cousin had never found lodgement in her mind, and, indeed, it was for the very reason that she was aware how earnestly the girl would repudiate any reflection cast upon the integrity of her passion, that she had chosen such a means of beguiling her from an unwelcome topic of discussion. She knew well, from past experience, that the subject of Stephen Lennox was one upon which, with a little encouragement, Sylvia could be coaxed to dwell for a considerable period. Had she not, indeed, often secured the coveted companionship of the girl she so dearly loved by judiciously introducing questions relating to the young man?

And so, now, desirous of restraining her mistress's thoughts from wandering back to the uncomfortable subject of the real thief, for whose offence she was suffering, Martha made immediate rejoinder to the indignant ejaculation.

"Ay, ay," she said, nodding her head; "I dinna misdoot it. It's a sair peety ye canna hae yer wull. Gin Maister Steenie had money, noo—"

Her prediction as to the possibilities which might have resulted from Lennox's possession of a fortune was destined never to be enunciated. A knock at the door indicated the expiration of the time allowed for the interview. This was immediately followed by the appearance of the warden himself, who announced that a turnkey waited without to reconduct the prisoner to her cell.

"Oh, Martha, Martha, how we have wasted our time! You have told me absolutely nothing that I wanted to know!" The visitor's face was eloquent of disappointment and chagrin. Where had the valuable moments gone? How unproductive had they been! How little had she accomplished!

The old woman smiled a smile of stern self-complacency. "Ye ken all I hae to tell ye, Miss Sylvie," she responded.

Sylvia approached with tears in her eyes, and seized the hard, toil-worn hands in hers. She pressed them lovingly between her own small fingers, which were of such different mould and hue, and again laid a kiss upon each of the hollowed cheeks, with lingering, loving compassion. As she so caressed her in full view of the chief officer of the jail that held her prisoner, a gleam of pride came into the old woman's eyes, and her gaunt figure drew itself proudly up, until one could no longer detect the bend of the shoulders, wrought by a habit of stooping over her sewing.

"May the Lord guide ye, my bairn," she said, with a hoarse tremble in her voice, "an' keep ye sauf an' soun'. Fare ye weel."

"It is only for a little while, Martha dear," the girl replied; and her own voice was not quite steady. "I shall come again as soon as I

can, and you shall remain here only until my efforts can effect your release."

A sudden suspicion seemed at that moment to flash into the woman's mind. She detained the small hands an instant longer in her grasp, as she asked, with a keen, penetrating scrutiny of the agitated face before her,—

"Did your mither ken ye cam' hither, Miss Sylvie?"

The girl frowned and grew red. She would have preferred that Martha had not put the question to her. She was deeply mortified and wounded by her mother's relentless persecution of one who had served her long and faithfully; besides this, it was not pleasant to be obliged to acknowledge before a stranger like the warden that she was acting without her mother's consent. She hesitated somewhat, and then replied with an evasion of the direct question.

"I—I did not tell her," she stammered.

The old woman gave a comprehending nod of her homely, sandy-thatched head.

"Aweel," she exclaimed, "I ken, I ken! The sicht o' your bonny face has been a mighty coomfort to me, Miss Sylvie, an' I'll no' go for to deny it; but dinna fash yersel' to coom again. I'll no' forget ye, ma certy, an' bairns had best honor their faither an' their mither, ye ken, my lamb. Dinna forget that good counsel, Miss Sylvie. 'Honor thy faither an' thy mither—thy faither *and* thy mither.'"

She looked keenly into the girl's face as she repeated, with strenuous emphasis, the commandment. Then, dropping the small hands abruptly, she turned to the waiting warden.

"Thank ye kindly, sir," she said. "I'm at your sairvice noo."

The warden bowed gravely. There was that in the gaunt old Scotchwoman's bearing, a sort of simple but lofty dignity, that suggested her own attitude of self-respect and appealed to the respect of others. He accompanied her courteously to the door, where he placed her in charge of the turnkey and then returned to his visitor.

"Mr. Lennox is making quite an exhaustive inspection of the jail, Miss Yorke," he said. "He desired me to ask if you would not like to join him."

The girl had sunk into a chair, and was furtively wiping the tears from her eyes. She shuddered at the warden's suggestion, and shook her head.

"Oh, no," she said, very softly,—"oh, no." She repeated the words almost in a whisper. As she spoke, she seemed to shrink back as from a threatened torture. "I could not, sir; I have no wish to see such places. I have dreamed of them too often."

She halted, gazing, as if in painful retrospection, at the rug in front of her.

The warden was not unaccustomed to this shrinking horror on the part of the uninitiated from scenes which long association had robbed of all repulsiveness for himself. He smiled.

"Perhaps your dreams have been worse than the reality," he remarked, pleasantly. "My prison is not half such a bad place as you imagine it, I assure you, my dear young lady. It is quite com-

fortable enough for felons that have offended against the laws of their country."

The girl raised her eyes suddenly to his.

"Perhaps that,—yes," she responded. "But, sir, for those who have not offended against the laws and yet are detained within your walls,—how do prison rigors affect such?"

Her blue eyes were ablaze with the challenge and reproach of one who holds the servant responsible for the master's misdeeds. Even this man, clement and kindly officer though he seemed, was, in her sight, guilty of heinous offence against her, simply because he was the minister of a justice that through hideous error had forfeited the right to judge.

Thinking her still swayed by an excessive and unreasonable girlish championship of her servant's fancied wrongs, the warden excused her ardor, as men are wont to condone the transgressions of youth and beauty. He preserved his good nature, and replied, indulgently and suavely,—

"There are, without doubt, cases of unjust imprisonment, my dear young lady. The law is a human institution, and, as such, is liable to err. But, I assure you, instances of the miscarriage of justice are exceedingly rare, and so infrequent that only once in a term of fifteen years' service have I felt good reason to doubt the wise conclusions of the law."

Sylvia Yorke rose abruptly, and confronted him with glowing cheeks and defiant mien.

"Is it indeed so, sir?" she exclaimed. "Your wider experience has been less prolific than my restricted one. Allow me to tell you that, within my narrow range of opportunity, I have known two cases in which justice has become outrageous tyranny and the law an abominable oppressor of innocence."

Now, indeed, was Sylvia Yorke beautiful. Agitation and excitement gave unusual animation to her features. Her eyes shone brilliantly; her whole frame seemed instinct with suppressed feeling. Her tall young figure was drawn to its full height, her head thrown up and a little back; her bosom, beneath its close-fitting outer garment of delicate-toned, chinchilla-bordered gray cloth, rose and fell, as her heart beat and throbbed under the influence of strong emotion. The purple violets nestling in the fur at her breast were no deeper in tone than the iris surrounding her dilated pupils, nor was their perfume more fragrant than the exquisite aroma of maidenliness that seemed to exhale from her presence.

The man in hiding behind the desk had much ado to restrain his admiration and yearning within the limits he had imposed upon himself. His face had grown white under the stern exercise of self-restraint, and so knitted was his forehead that the dark eyebrows would have met and joined in one unbroken line above the lids but for those two deep, perpendicular furrows that separated them. Had the warden and his guest been less occupied with themselves and with each other, they must have noticed the disjointed, suppressed whispering which issued unconsciously from the white and trembling lips.

The utterances were very broken and indistinct, and the high back of the desk muffled them, but they evinced a variety of emotions, and were so strange and perturbed that they might have aroused in an observer suspicions of Van Vorst's sanity.

"Sylvia! What faith, my God, what faith!—She is mine, not hers.—Trusting little soul! Poor, ignorant little child! So unsus-spicous of the truth! Sylvia!—oh, Sylvia, Sylvia, Sylvia!"

These phrases seemed to be expelled from within his breast by uncontrollable feeling, at intervals. The name itself was oft repeated, as if it were dear to him and he loved to linger caressingly upon its syllables.

Meanwhile the warden had responded to the girl's eloquence with a question that obviously embarrassed her:

"The miscarriage of justice has, I presume, been proved beyond question in the cases you cite, Miss Yorke? The law has acknowledged its errors and remedied them?"

The girl's brave mien drooped somewhat. Her proud crest lost a little of its lofty defiance.

"Well, no," she stammered, "it has not been proved; and that is just why it is so horrible. There is no question as to the innocence of both the supposed culprits, and yet the law will not admit it."

The warden evidently labored hard to conceal a smile.

"No question? You surprise me," he returned, with admirable gravity. "No question in whose mind, may I ask?"

There was a brief interval of silence. Poor, impetuous Sylvia, hot and eager in enthusiasm for her cause, suddenly felt herself sore bestead. In a moment, however, she rallied her convictions, and, with renewed courage born of them, replied, with her head held bravely aloft, "In mine, sir."

Then, for she was by no means without a sense of humor, she realized how absurdly deficient in convincing evidence her reply must appear to one with whom mere sentimental conclusions were scarcely liable to carry much weight. A bright, sunny smile broke over her face.

"I am afraid you will not admit that my testimony is unimpeachable," she continued; "but, nevertheless, it satisfies me. Nothing in this world but their own admission of guilt would shake my confidence in the victims in these two cases." She paused an instant, as if a sudden thought had struck her. Then she went nearer the warden, and, lowering her voice until it was only with extreme exertion of his hearing that the eavesdropper could possess himself of her speech, she said, "Sir, did you never hear of the case of a gentleman named Murray Van Vorst who was arrested and convicted on a charge of embezzlement about ten years ago? The case was a noted one, for he belonged to a wealthy and well-known New York family, and his arrest created a considerable sensation at the time."

For the first time since his guest's appearance the warden's mind reverted to his late prisoner. He started, and involuntarily his eyes

sped toward the desk behind which he had stationed him. Ignorant of the girl's connection with Van Vorst, and uncertain as to what might be the effect of her forthcoming speech upon the man of whose presence in the room she was unaware, he felt himself horribly embarrassed, and could discover but one method of dealing with this unforeseen contingency: that was by escaping from it. Resolute, ready, and resourceful as he was to meet the requirements of his office, the good warden did not feel himself competent to handle sentimental crises.

"Yes, I remember it well," he replied, in a hasty and nervous manner, which conveyed to Sylvia the impression that she was detaining him beyond the limit of his patience. "A sad case,—a sad case. Now, my dear young lady, if you will not join your cousin in his tour——"

The girl shook her head and held out her hand to him.

"No, sir," she said. "Pray excuse me. I must apologize for having so largely encroached upon your time. If you will be so good as to send word to my cousin that I am ready to go, and will also allow me to await his return here, I shall be much obliged. I have to thank you for making my errand so easy and agreeable. You have been most considerate. I had dreaded it beyond words."

The warden took her outstretched hand and pressed it cordially.

"I am glad, indeed, if anything I have been able to do can soften your prejudices against these necessary asylums," he said, still with obvious haste in his manner.

He hurriedly wheeled a chair forward, at a goodly distance from the desk, toward which he threw many apprehensive glances, and invited her to occupy it.

"There are books on the table," he suggested.

"Thank you," she replied. "I prefer merely to rest here, I think."

He saw her safely seated, cast a final glance toward Van Vorst's place of hiding, bowed courteously, and retreated, inwardly congratulating himself upon his timely escape, and speculating as to what might be the result of the propinquity of the two persons whom he had left behind him. His intention was to send Lennox to her at once; but this proved more difficult of accomplishment than he had anticipated.

Prison systems and methods had awakened the young man's interest to an unusual degree, and he was not willing to abridge so favorable an opportunity of thoroughly acquainting himself with them merely to shorten Sylvia's term of waiting; for the girl was always good-naturedly indulgent of his slow, easy-going habits, and had somewhat spoiled him as to promptitude. It was not an unusual thing for her patience to wait upon his moderation. Therefore she found her departure considerably delayed.

For a while she scarcely noted the passage of time, having many and various reflections to occupy her mind. But presently she grew weary of sitting still, with idly folded hands, and rose from her seat. She approached the table, and remained a few moments, glancing over

the books which were strewn upon it. These failed to arouse any very lively interest in her, however, and she next turned her attention to the pictures that adorned the walls.

She roamed from one to another of these, and, being possessed of some knowledge of drawing and color, and having a due reverence and regard for the same, their frequent offences against a catholic taste inspired her with resentment rather than admiration, and she hastened from horror to horror until disgust began to yield to amusement. It was largely apparent that her kindly host was not a connoisseur in matters of art.

Her tour of the apartment brought her presently opposite the tall desk. Behind this, immediately over the chair in which Van Vorst was seated, there hung a marvellous reproduction of Millais' Huguenot Lovers. It occurred to her, as she passed around the desk to gain a nearer view, that she would call the attention of Steenie (who assumed to be an artist) to it on his return to the room ; that is, if he ever did return.

"How long he is!" she exclaimed aloud,—and then, "Oh!" she added, drawing back in startled surprise.

She had compassed the desk with her eyes still fixed upon the picture, and had thus come suddenly and unexpectedly upon a man, sitting in a chair, with hands nervously gripping the arms, and haggard eyes, in which there was yet a feverish look of hope and vague expectancy, turned apologetically, imploringly, up to hers.

"Oh!" she cried again, this time more in perplexity than alarm, for, like pure-souled Una, she had from experience acquired no dread of lions.

Then the man arose, slowly, a trifle unsteadily, for it required more self-control than one might imagine to keep under his emotions so as not to frighten her who stood, with a level, inquiring, somewhat protesting look in her clear eyes, mutely questioning his right to be there. He took a step forward and tried to speak, but, somehow, words would not come. Then he threw out his hands, with palms turned upward as if in entreaty, gazing in awful, mute anxiety at her the while. He struggled again for speech, but with no better success, for the words died away unuttered in his throat.

She, quaking inwardly at the strangeness of his conduct and the inexplicable agitation of his manner, which seemed to indicate insanity, yet stirred to profound pity by something mightily pathetic and moving in his glance and gesture, was about to turn aside in an endeavor to gain the door, when the latent forces of his yet strong manhood restored Van Vorst's lost control. He dropped his hands to his sides, and the tragic look of entreaty and despair wholly died out from his hazel eyes. His face recovered its stern composure, but its ordinary expression of rigid unexpectancy was somewhat lightened by a glimmer of anticipation. His voice, when he spoke, was firmer and clearer than her own had been.

"Sylvia," he said, very quietly and simply, "you do not remember me? I was once your father."

CHAPTER III.

CHARLOTTE PENDEXTER was standing before her mirror, criticising the finishing touches that her maid Capstick was giving her toilette.

Capstick had had a not altogether easy time of it that evening, for Mrs. Pendexter was in a frame of mind very exceptional in one of her easy-going temperament. No effort upon the maid's part seemed wholly satisfactory to the mistress, although the former could not understand how such a *chef-d'œuvre* as her skill had fashioned could fail to be content with its own perfection. But that Mrs. Pendexter was not content was obvious from the expression of dissatisfaction about her lovely mouth.

"There," she exclaimed, finally, "that will do, Capstick. You need not try any longer. The gown is not a success, for all it cost. You are not to blame: you've done as well with me under the circumstances as any one could. Just give me my rings, and you may go."

The maid's face expressed strong dissent from her mistress's expression of disapproval.

"Why, madam," she responded, "I have never seen you more beautiful, excusing the liberty I take in saying so."

But, notwithstanding the maid's evidently sincere flattery, the fair face retained its captious, critical look of disfavor, which remained upon it some moments after Capstick had retired. And, yet, how exacting must have been a standard of beauty that was unappreciative of the reflection framed in the large oval of the silver-bordered mirror, like an exquisite miniature mounted in a costly rococo case!

The figure, not above medium height, was charmingly full in its outlines, but by no means suggestive of over-weight. The neck and arms, generously exposed to view by the fashion of the corsage, were white and rounded as those of a child. Indeed, the skin, for it accompanied hair that had been red in early youth and was even now streaked through its deeper richness of hue with locks of a ruddy tint, was, beneath the electric light which fell upon it from above, of quite a dazzling whiteness, relieved only here and there—upon either cheek, for instance, and upon the small, dainty little ears—by a faint suggestion of the healthy life-current that still gave the vitality of girlhood to Charlotte Pendexter in this her thirty-second year. Her eyes were a soft, velvety brown, overflowing with tenderness and sympathy for those she loved, abundant in scorn for those she contemned, hot in defence of those whose cause she espoused, and past-mistresses in the art of provoking admiration and homage if it were the desire of their owner to arouse these sentiments.

The gown which had evoked its wearer's condemnation would have seemed to a less critical observer a marvel of skill, costliness, and beauty. The fabric was velvet, of a shade of green that reflected, instead of absorbing, the rays of artificial light in which it was designed to be worn. It seemed to be made of a single piece of the goods, falling from neck to hem without visible means of constraint or seam; and yet, in some cunning and mysterious fashion, it was

made subtly to define the lovely curves and symmetrical proportions of the charming form it draped. Bordering the neck and making wondrous contrast with the white skin was an edge of dark Russian sable, and from this depended a sort of broad Vandyke collar of the velvet, embroidered with an intricate design in tiny rhinestones. The hem of the skirt was likewise edged with the fur. Huge puffs of the lustrous material, barely covering the upper portion of the arms, and powdered with small conventional flowers outlined with the brilliant stones, did nominal duty as sleeves; and a string of magnificent diamonds and emeralds, worn close about the throat, called attention to the purity and texture of its cuticle. A sparkling crescent of the same jewels scintillated upon its spring above the rich parting of her hair.

Just why a woman so formed, fashioned, and clad should have found reason to quarrel with her appearance would have perplexed many an observer beside Capstick; but the truth was, Mrs. Pendexter this evening was entertaining a guest of rare and most exceptional distinction, the parallel of whom in certain respects she had never before received beneath her roof. She was nervous as to the impression she should make upon him.

Her dinner, the function for which she was so gorgeously arrayed, had been planned at the request of a girl of whom she was very fond, whom she pitied as an unfortunately circumstanced child of a weak and ambitious mother, and whom she admired as a plucky little soul making a brave fight against a strong tide of unworthy maternal schemes and projects.

She had known Sylvia Yorke only a few weeks,—the girl had only come out that winter,—but she had had a certain degree of acquaintance with Mrs. Yorke for many years. It was at an afternoon tea, about a month before, that, seeking a moment's respite from the ceaseless chatter of the multitude, she had run across Sylvia, sitting quite by herself in a hidden nook of a beautiful hall-way, where discreetly arranged hangings permitted strict seclusion. Mrs. Pendexter had long since acquired a knowledge of the little cubby-hole, for the house was celebrated as one of frequent entertainment, and she on most occasions was one of its honored guests.

The girl had been presented to her before this, and Mrs. Pendexter, coming thus unexpectedly upon her, greeted her with a nonchalant little nod and smile as she drew aside the curtains and caught sight of her sitting there alone.

“You are tired of it too, Miss Yorke?” she exclaimed, brightly. “May I come in and join you, or would you rather I should go away and leave you quite by yourself?”

Then she perceived how very white and exhausted the girl looked, and before Sylvia could reply, she continued,—

“You will let me share your retreat, I am sure. Have you had any tea? Wait a moment.” She dropped the portières before her, and, turning, beckoned to a servant. “Get me a cup of Russian tea and a chicken sandwich, please,” she said. “Bring it to me here: I will wait for it.”

She drew back within the hangings until the man should return, pondering the while upon that spent, white look she had discovered on the young face. "Oh, these worldly mothers!" she muttered, between half-closed lips. She spoke with feeling, with bitterness even, for she herself had been the victim of a matchmaker.

"What did I hear about young Lennox? Can it be that, I wonder?—Oh, thank you; that is very nice!" She took the plate and serviette from the man's hands, smiling upon him as she did so. These little pleasant recognitions of services rendered her demonstrated one of the lovable traits of the woman's character. She was humane of nature, and admitted a certain kinship with all mankind, which withheld her from excluding even the lowliest from her consideration. Then she lifted the portière and placed the plate in the girl's lap.

"Eat and drink these," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone. "You must never neglect to fortify yourself when you take part in one of these violent assaults upon Pleasure. You can never conquer even a foothold in the citadel unless you keep the battery of your digestion in working order. Neglect to oil that frequently, and you will find yourself made easy prisoner of Wretchedness and lodged in the dungeon of Misery."

She smiled pleasantly, and then gave a little cry. The girl had made an effort to raise the cup to her lips, but her hand shook so violently she dared not trust it with the costly china, and so she had replaced it upon its saucer. The next moment her head fell sideways upon the cushion against which she leaned, and Mrs. Pendexter saw that she had fainted.

She was a woman of quick intuition and ready action. She despatched a man for water, and, when it came, chafed the girl's brow. She had her own vinaigrette, and applied the strong salts to the small nostrils. Before long she had restored Sylvia to herself. Then she made a suggestion to her.

"Your mother is probably going on to other houses," she said. "I am going directly home. Let me take you with me. I will drop you at your own door, or, if you will permit me, take you to my own house and make you comfortable for a little while, until you are quite yourself again: may I?"

Sylvia looked gratefully into the soft brown eyes, and nodded feebly.

"Oh, if you will," she whispered, in evident relief.

It was borne in upon Mrs. Pendexter's mind that the girl did not covet her mother's society just then. Her card-case was pocket-book as well. She slipped a bill into the footman's hand, enjoining secrecy as to Miss Yorke's fainting, and bade him find Mrs. Yorke and tell her that her daughter had succumbed to a severe headache and that Mrs. Pendexter had assumed charge of her and had taken her home. She was well aware that the lustre of her name would blind Mrs. Yorke to the abduction she had committed.

The Henry Pendexters were two or three rounds in advance of the Yorkes upon the social ladder. Cynthia Yorke would find it easy to pardon any liberty on Mrs. Pendexter's part which would secure to

herself a more intimate relationship with that lady, even if that relationship were only gained by proxy and bore small personal result to herself.

The fresh air restored Sylvia to such a degree that when the victoria drew up before Mrs. Pendexter's house the girl felt quite herself again, physically. Charlotte insisted, however, upon coddling and making much of her, and, so rapidly do female intimacies increase and strengthen, by the time she had removed her guest's wraps, established her upon a luxurious lounge in front of a bright fire, and administered to her a draught of orange-flower water, Sylvia had come to feel as if she had known her hostess all her life.

It was no difficult matter for the elder woman to secure the girl's confidence. Two hours had not elapsed since Sylvia had undergone the most dramatic and soul-stirring experience of her life; its spell still possessed her, heart and brain; her mind was filled with one subject, one image. It was easy enough to lead her on to disclose what it was that had caused the overthrow of her physical equilibrium.

"Think how terrible it is, Mrs. Pendexter," she exclaimed, her voice thrilling and breaking pathetically, as she concluded her recital, "for a child not to recognize her own father! To stand like a stranger before him, shy, tongue-tied, embarrassed beyond the power even of greeting him! Why, when he said that to me, 'Sylvia, do you not remember me? I was once your father!' I should have rushed forward and thrown my arms about his neck and cried, 'Do not say you *were*, say you *are*, you have ever been, you always will be, my father, my dear, dear father, whom I have never ceased to love and believe in, in spite of everything!' Instead of that, what did I do when he made that heart-broken appeal to me? I drew back, and uttered a little cry of fright; and he must have thought I shrank from and wished to avoid him, for, oh, Mrs. Pendexter, such a look came into his eyes! And just then the door opened, and Mr. Lennox and the warden entered the room, and, before I could recover myself to address him, my father had bowed to us all, muttered some words of farewell to the warden, and left the room. As he went out, my cousin turned to the warden. I was so dazed that I stood there speechless and half conscious, but I remember hearing Steenie say, 'Who was that, warden?' and the warden replied, looking at me, instead of at Steenie, while he spoke, 'That's a man who has been in my care for ten years,—whose case is the only one which has ever aroused in my mind a doubt as to the competent finding of a jury. That is Murray Van Vorst.' There was no need for Steenie to make that warning gesture to the warden. I had known it all before. But I made no sign that I comprehended anything. I left the prison without alluding to the matter in any way, and I think, even now, my cousin does not know whether I heard the warden's words or not. I could not talk about it then, even to Steenie. My mother did not know that I had gone to see Martha, and I could not urge my meeting with my father as an excuse for not keeping my engagement with her. I would have given a good deal to stay at home this afternoon with my own thoughts, but mamma would not have allowed me to do so

without a good reason. And so, you see, I had to come, although I felt so desperately unable to."

This had happened a month before, and in the interval a warm intimacy had sprung up between the woman and the girl. Charlotte Pendexter's position as Sylvia's confidante was a rather delicate one. Like all the world, she had been interested in the Van Vorst scandal at the time of its occurrence, and, though personally unacquainted with the malefactor, she had been shocked and distressed at the idea of a gentleman, a member of her own order (for the Van Vorsts outranked the Yorkes, and Murray Van Vorst had stepped down a couple of rounds on the social ladder to join hands with the woman he had married), being transformed into a felon. In common with public opinion generally, she had taken for granted the prisoner's guilt. The facts in the case seemed conclusive evidence, and it was easy enough to see how the thing had come about. Given certain *dramatis personæ*, suitable conditions, an assumed weakness of character in the chief actor, and it is not difficult to work up a very pretty little domestic tragedy.

There had been the hero, Murray Van Vorst, possessed of a moderate income (the Van Vorst millions had not then come into his hands); his wife, an ambitious and exacting woman, swayed by a desire to rival those queens of society whose monthly expenditures cast into insignificance such annual income as she could command; his rich but parsimonious father-in-law, whose affairs were largely managed by Van Vorst himself; an accumulation of debts; a period of financial depression, which rendered the money-market tight and money-lenders wary; an establishment run on a scale beyond its owner's means: it was scarcely to be expected that with this evidence before them, together with the spurious checks made payable to Van Vorst and bearing his endorsements, drawn in old Samuel Yorke's name and repudiated by him as forgeries, a jury should hold the son-in-law innocent.

All this was running through Charlotte Pendexter's mind as she descended the staircase, entered her dining-room, and made a final survey of the exquisitely appointed table that stood ready for her guests.

Carping and discontented as she had been with the results of Capstick's efforts, she could but applaud those of Maule, her chief butler. There was nothing to be altered, nothing to be suggested in either arrangement or decoration. It was worth paying the man his price to secure such artistic service as his. She made the tour of the table, the discreet and valuable servant following a few steps behind, with a look of anxiety in his watchful eyes. He knew his mistress to be well qualified to pass judgment upon the results of his handiwork, and, from the minuteness of her instructions, he felt that to-night, for some reason, she would be hypercritical.

The table, a round one (as a widow she preferred this shape, which obviated the necessity of choosing a *vis-à-vis* to occupy the place of host), was laid for eight only, and it did not take long to compass its circuit. Maule noticed that the look of gratification upon his mis-

tress's face increased, until she reached the seat upon the left of her own. Here she paused and knit her brow, gazing thoughtfully at that particular cover. His heart began to throb apprehensively: what had she discovered out of harmony with the general scheme? After a brief silent contemplation, she turned to him.

"I think, after all, I will have the violet boutonnieres changed. Take them off, Maule, please, and have some white chrysanthemums brought in. Heavily perfumed flowers breed powerful associations in some minds," she continued, as if to herself, while Maule moved about noiselessly, removing the discarded violets; "and to-night we must avoid anything that may breed retrospection.—You have done very well indeed, Maule," she observed, again addressing the butler. "I am quite satisfied."

Once more she cast a general look of survey over the table, and then moved toward the door. Here she turned, and glanced back to see what impression a *coup d'œil* would produce.

"I wonder what he will think of it," she murmured. "After ten years of prison life, I wonder how a return to comfort and luxury affects him—I wonder!"

It was a considerable concession to her friendship for Sylvia that she was making this evening. She had the reputation of being a conservative and generally exclusive woman, although those who shared her predilections for a somewhat guarded attitude toward the world were wont to animadvert at times upon her quixotism and unconventionality, the truth being that there was a strain of originality and audacity running through her blood which influenced her occasionally to indulge in an unexpected independence of judgment and liberty of action.

To-night, however, she was aware that she had been unusually daring, and a less courageous woman would have been decidedly nervous in contemplating the possible consequences of an undoubtedly rash and audacious step. She had invited to her house, as her chief guest of honor, to meet persons of the highest social standing and the most influential character, a recently discharged convict, a man on whom she had never set eyes, and who might be, for all she knew to the contrary (for her doubts of his guilt had only been aroused, not really strengthened into disbelief, by Sylvia's filial faith and unswerving confidence), as dastardly a scoundrel as ever ran unhung. She shrugged her charming shoulders, and wondered inwardly if indeed she had not been a weak fool to make this attempt to re-establish a gentleman felon on a lofty social plane, through sympathy with a sorely distressed and tender-hearted daughter, who craved opportunities for meeting a father whom she was forbidden to receive upon the natural territory of her mother's hearthstone.

It had been a feat not altogether easy of accomplishment, this that she had undertaken. Small as her dinner-list was, it is doubtful if the composition of any that she had ever made out had caused her so much thought and consideration. And yet it had been necessary for her to select but four guests, as half the octette was a matter of course. Sylvia and herself, Van Vorst and Lennox, had formed the original

nucleus of the occasion ; it was only to select a corresponding number to round out the table. But these ! It was a simple matter to choose four leaders of special coteries from among her distinguished acquaintance, but a more difficult business to coax persons of such distinction to meet upon equal terms a man but recently discharged from penal servitude.

Possibly no woman in all New York could have succeeded in such an undertaking as Charlotte Pendexter had been able to do. She had gone to the very fountain-head of society, convinced that to turn the tap of favor there in, Van Vorst's direction would be to set running a current of crystal water that should cleanse his reputation from all stains in the eyes of the world.

To General Mede, autocrat and dictator, her own uncle, and to Alicia, his wife, philanthropist *à la mode de grande dame*, she had made her first application. The general, well aware of the responsibility devolving upon his nod (it was said of him that he could bow any man, whosoever he might be, into society), at first absolutely refused to meet the *ci-devant* criminal. But Charlotte had what is vulgarly denominated "a pull" over him, and the old war-horse felt constrained to mind the curb of her small hands. The fact was, the general's means were ill proportioned to his worldly status, and, being a bit of a plunger and addicted to Marginal Indiscretion (a contagious disease bred from the gambling germ, for which the only cure is a smarting and most uncomfortable irritant called Absolute Ruin), he had found it convenient upon occasions to seek relief from the effects of his ailment at the hands of his fair and wealthy young niece, who was wont to apply to his dolorous condition a soothing balm called Temporary Loans. And so it was that, after certain arguments had been adduced by his gentle physician in furtherance of her request, the old Kaiser of club and drawing-room yielded at discretion.

This was an example of a case in which the first step alone counted. The presence and countenance of General Mede once assured her function, Charlotte found it quite an easy matter to secure the acceptance of her aunt Alicia, who, as one of a committee of a very swell society for the Relief and Reformation of Discharged Criminals, could not consistently refuse to accord what encouragement her mere countenance might afford "one of those very sad and unfortunate creatures, you know, my dear, and quite a gentleman, I give you my word" (thus she afterward expressed herself to a near friend), in whose behalf the R. and R. Society had been organized. Having gained over two such important representatives of leading factions, the young widow felt the rest of her task greatly simplified. Angela Brooke, whose smile or frown gave the cue to a large following of the ultra-fashionable world, and Urquhart Dupee, whose opinion governed a younger and more rapid set of men than that over which the general's influence extended, had lent themselves to her scheme for the rehabilitation of Murray Van Vorst, with that easy *laissez-aller* and good nature which is a characteristic of their especial caste.

"Oh, the poor dear!" Angie Brooke had cried, effusively, when Charlotte, whom she somewhat feared as well as admired, advanced

her invitation. "Of course we must set him up again, Charley. He is so awfully good to look at, don't you think? And so desperately sad, too, don't you know! Reminds you of Edgar in *Lucia*, or Kendal in *The Iron Master*, or—er—er—one of Ouida's men, Chandos, or Strathmore, or one of those. It's an awfully shocking thing, of course, to have spent ten years in prison, don't you know, but I saw him the other night having dinner at *Muset's*, and I didn't see but his manners were as good as any one's."

Dupee gave a prolonged whistle when Mrs. Pendexter accosted him upon the subject, apologizing, of course, an instant afterward for such a lapse of breeding.

"But—to reinstate a forger!" he exclaimed. "A labor of Hercules, indeed! It goes without saying that I am at your service, Mrs. Pendexter. I shall never forget your good offices in patching up that row between old Latimer and me. Lord! I might have had Theo Latimer loaded upon me if it hadn't been for you! You'd better believe I've fought shy of wedded charmers since then. Let's see—he has all the Van Vorst millions at his back. I don't believe you'll have such hard work, after all. And, by Jove! a fellow ought to be rather applauded than condemned for forcing open the grip of such a skin-flint as old man Yorke."

And so Mrs. Pendexter had gained every point thus far in her enterprising scheme. It remained to be seen what results would be forthcoming from it. She entered her drawing-room, which was beautiful and attractive as are the apartments of nineteenth-century women of culture and wealth, and seated herself in a low chair, running over in her mind the order in which she had placed her guests at table. She laughed softly, a little amused chuckle, as she considered how aghast Cynthia Yorke would be had she a suspicion of who were to be two of the guests that her daughter would meet that night,—a father defunct in law, and a lover nullified as such by the maternal edict.

Even as she smiled thus, the door opened, and Sylvia presented herself, unannounced. She came forward with a little anxious look in her eyes.

"He hasn't come yet, Charlotte?" she asked, with breathless haste, even before greeting her hostess.

The latter shook her head, smiling in mingled encouragement and reproof.

"No, of course not. You are shockingly early for eight o'clock dinner. Only half after seven now. And you are white as a sheet, child, and shaking like a leaf. Come, come, this is too foolish: you will disgrace me before my guests. They are persons of consequence, if you please, unaccustomed to being asked to meet unsophisticated children who have not yet learned the art of self-control."

The girl made a desperate effort and steadied herself a bit.

"Oh, Charlotte," she groaned, "what if he shouldn't like me! I don't think I'm looking my best to-night; and yet I've been walking all afternoon, trying to get some color into my cheeks!"

The deep anxiety of her expression had its comic as well as its pathetic side. Charlotte Pendexter pretended to see only the former

aspect. Her clear laugh rang out upon the air as she replied, but at the same time she was in deep sympathy with the girl's solicitude, though, scanning her young guest's appearance with the eye of a connoisseur, she felt that it had little cause to exist. Sylvia was certainly a vision of fair and tender loveliness.

"You vain little cat!" she exclaimed. "Handsome is as handsome does. Behave yourself, and your looks will be all right. That gown is very fetching: a present from grandpapa?"

Sylvia nodded.

"Yes," she replied, still with an anxious look in her eyes. "I thought it pretty too, at first, but now I've grown dissatisfied with it. You are so gorgeous, Charlotte! I never saw anything so beautiful as you are to-night."

The elder woman turned the compliment aside with a question. She cared little for the flattery of speech.

"How is your grandfather, Sylvia?" she asked. "I heard the other day that he was failing: is it so?"

"Yes," the girl answered, gravely. "He was much distressed and disturbed at the time my money was stolen. Oh, not on account of the money: do not think that, Charlotte," she entreated, earnestly, seeing a look of contempt in her hostess's brown eyes. "I know that people consider grandpapa close, but he has never been so to me. Perhaps he is to mamma, and I'm afraid she makes known the fact; but, Charlotte,"—she spoke more slowly, evidently choosing her words with care,—"mamma is really extravagant, and grandpapa needs to hold a rather tight rein upon her. With me he is very different: he never refuses anything I ask. That five hundred dollars was a gift from him, quite unsolicited by me. I am sure it was not the mere loss of the money that disturbed him so, for it had already passed out of his hands; and why should he have been distressed because I had lost instead of spent it?"

"H'm—well, I don't know. Do you really think the incident had any direct bearing on his illness?"

She asked the question, not because she was especially interested in the physical condition of old Samuel Yorke, but because she was solicitous to keep his granddaughter's attention diverted from the ordeal that was imminent. The subject of the mysterious theft she knew to be one that closely engaged the girl's mind, for she was aware of Sylvia's determination to effect her old servant's release from what she considered false imprisonment. Sylvia's reply was vigorously emphatic.

"Yes; I am sure it had," she said. "Oh, Charlotte, you cannot imagine what a scene we had that awful day! Grandpapa had given me the money that morning,—I think because he had heard me tell mamma I needed some new furs and she had been quite impatient with me, saying that she did not know where I would get them, as she certainly had no money to give me. I put the money in a drawer in my dressing-table, and went down to luncheon. There was no doubt of my putting it there, for both mamma and Martha saw me do it, as they were in the room at the time. Martha was fitting to mamma

some under-waists that she was making her. They were not quite through when the luncheon-gong sounded, and mamma told me to go down and say to grandpapa she would come immediately. She did come very soon after, and while we were having luncheon, Jaynes, the butler, brought in a package which had come C.O.D. by express. Grandpapa wished to pay for it, but the amount was something under fifteen dollars, and he had nothing less than a twenty-dollar bill. I offered to change this for him, and went up-stairs for the money. The whole amount had gone! I thought I must have been mistaken in believing I had put it in the drawer: so I went into the next room, which is the sewing-room, and asked Martha if she remembered seeing me place it there. She said yes, but did not seem much interested in the matter and did not offer to help me search for it. Finally I was obliged to go down and tell mamma and grandpapa that I could not find it. At first grandpapa didn't seem to take it in. I thought him chiefly concerned about the expressman. He turned to mamma very quietly, saying, 'Perhaps you, Cynthia, can favor me with the amount,' or something of that kind. He had evidently forgotten mamma's statement that she was quite strapped; but she reminded him of it. And then, Charlotte, the tempest broke. He flew into an awful passion, and said such strange, incomprehensible things——"

"Such as what?" Charlotte was beginning to feel interested.

"Oh, I don't remember. They didn't impress me at all, because they seemed just the ravings of insanity; besides, I didn't hear much, for mamma bade me leave the room. Poor thing! I hated to leave her alone with him, for she looked frightened to death; and I didn't wonder. You have no idea, Charlotte, how terrible it is when grandpapa loses control of himself."

"What do you think caused his anger, if not the loss of the money?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. At first I thought he believed mamma had borrowed it of me; that was what I gathered from what he said to her. But that showed how unreasonable he was, for of course if I had lent it to her I should have said so at once; although it would have made him angry, for he has forbidden mamma to borrow from me."

"Is your mother in the habit of borrowing from you?" Charlotte asked. Her interest in the case was growing.

Sylvia dropped her eyes and fidgeted with the Irish point cover that draped the small table beside her. She had unintentionally betrayed a fact which voluntarily she would not have disclosed.

"Well, she has done so, on occasions," she admitted, reluctantly. Then, as if in excuse, she continued quickly, "Mamma has absolutely no idea of the value of money. She has never a cent in her purse, and really, Charlotte, it is not niggardliness that makes grandpapa so particular with her. It is necessary for some one to keep her within bounds. It seems, perhaps, disloyal in me to say so, but it is only justice to grandpapa to acknowledge it."

Mrs. Pendexter nodded.

"Oh, it's a common enough fault among women," she said. "The

extravagance of our sex is so traditional a characteristic that it seems almost unfeminine not to be possessed of it. What brought your grandfather round finally?"

Sylvia did not respond at once. She sat quite still, gazing in apparent thoughtfulness at the small diamond buckles upon her hostess's satin slippers.

"Well," she returned presently, "I don't think he has ever quite come round, as you call it, Charlotte. He was taken very ill after that, and keeps his own rooms, seeing no one but Turbot, his valet. He continues to harbor some grudge against poor mamma, I think, for he will not have her come near him, and it is only during the last week that he has admitted me. He really looks awfully ill, and I feel most anxious about him, for I am very fond of grandpapa, Charlotte, in spite of everything."

Just what this widely comprehensive obstacle to her affection might comprise Mrs. Pendexter had no opportunity of asking; for at that moment the door opened and Maule announced,—

"Mr. Van Vorst."

Mrs. Pendexter rose immediately and advanced toward the door, dropping a reassuring word to Sylvia as she passed her. She noticed with much commiseration that there was not a vestige of color in the girl's face, and that her hands were twitching nervously in her lap. She felt deeply for the poor child's perturbation, which, in a measure, she shared, for this situation in which she had voluntarily placed herself had no precedent in her experience. However, her exquisite self-possession permitted no evidence of embarrassment to escape her, as, with cordially extended hand and a charming smile of welcome lighting her dark eyes, she moved graciously forward to greet her guest.

"Thank you for yielding to my request and coming a little early," she said, after the usual preliminary salutations had been exchanged. "You are affording me a rare and unusual pleasure to-night, Mr. Van Vorst. I thank you for allowing me the privilege of introducing you to your daughter."

Van Vorst looked down upon her with a visible softening of the iron constraint of his features.

"My indebtedness to you is too great for expression," he returned, simply. "I could not have anticipated such consideration from a stranger."

"For Sylvia's sake I ventured to solicit you," she remarked.

He gazed at her a moment in silence, as if reading her countenance to discover whether anything but genuine disinterestedness lay behind its apparent sincerity.

"Ah, yes. Of course; I quite understand it was for Sylvia's sake. Has she come?" he then asked, seeming to put himself as an object of consideration wholly aside.

Mrs. Pendexter made a backward motion with her head.

"Yes," she replied; "she is there.—Sylvia!"

And then she murmured a word of excuse and glided from the room, leaving Sylvia Yorke to make acquaintance with the father between whom and herself lay the broad gulf of ten years' separation.

Her mind dwelt upon the personality of her guest as she sat in a little anteroom awaiting the arrival of the rest; and this was not strange, for there was an unlikeness to other men about Murray Van Vorst, born of exceptional experience, which was wont to attract and rivet the interest of such as came in contact with him.

"A handsome man," she concluded. "Decidedly presentable, and with nothing in his manner or appearance to suggest his late residence." She breathed a sigh of relief. This was one point in her favor. "I wonder if that child's intuitions may not be right, after all," she rambled on. "There was not the look of an actual felon in the man's face. That was a curious little history of Sylvia's—old Yorke's unwarrantable rage, and the rest of it. Could it be possible for a man to allow himself to be convicted of a crime he never committed? Ten years of prison hardships and isolation to an innocent man. Father in heaven! no one could voluntarily condemn himself to that! And yet—it is hard to associate guilt with such a face as his. What an unutterably sad face it is! How he looked as he repeated my words, 'For Sylvia's sake'! It was as if he never dreamed of consideration being shown him for his own. Ah! the door-bell."

Motioning to Maule to wait a moment before answering the summons, she crossed the hall and re-entered the drawing-room. The two whom she had left there were standing beside the little table by which Sylvia had been sitting. The father's arms were about the girl, and her sweet face, all wet with tears, but smiling and infinitely happy, lay upon his breast.

At Charlotte's appearance Van Vorst withdrew his arms from Sylvia, and turned toward his hostess with a countenance so changed by joy, so inspired by a new hope, so illumined by recovered anticipation, that her soul stirred within her at the thought that she had been the instrument which had so quickened and animated these long-dormant emotions. As he took her hand in his and bowed in reverent gratitude above it, it seemed difficult for him to find fitting word or accent in which to address her. In all his life he had never been so profoundly moved toward another as he was at that moment toward this stranger who had brought within his reach the one thing in the world his heart coveted. His eyes were very dark with suppressed feeling, but glad withal, and his compressed lips twitched with the weight of a burden of indebtedness of which they found it hard to relieve themselves.

But intruders were imminent, and the woman he so passionately desired to thank was standing with her hand in his, awaiting his words. The compassion and sympathy in her look made still more difficult the exercise of his self-control. The door opened, and he hurriedly bent his head until it almost touched the delicate pink ear his voice accosted:

"Of all the actions set forth in the Bible, the one which most strongly appeals to our hearts is the salvation of the stricken wayfarer by the good Samaritan. Occasionally similar actions are performed in these days. I thank God that I have fallen in the path of a good Samaritan."

That was all he said in words, but the expression of his eyes added volumes thereto. If her dinner had passed off less perfectly than it did, Charlotte Pendexter would have felt no regret in having undertaken it. The function had been wholly justified in her sight.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was on the 20th of February that Mrs. Pendexter gave her dinner in honor of Murray Van Vorst. On the afternoon of the 14th of April, nearly two months later, she was sitting in her chamber before her private desk, scrutinizing two notes that had come to her by the same post, and comparing with some amusement their characters.

"Letter for letter they are alike," she said,—"letter for letter. It is curious; a plain case of heredity, for the child could not have acquired such exact similarity by imitation. She was separated from him at the time she must have been forming her hand."

She raised the two sheets of paper, and scanned them curiously as she leaned back in her chair. One was a note from Sylvia, whom she seldom saw of late, Mrs. Yorke having forbidden her daughter's visits to Charlotte since discovering how dangerously they menaced her own plans and purposes. It was short and hurried, and she went through it quickly.

"DARLING CHARLOTTE" (it ran),—

"I am so wretched. I have not seen any of you dear people, neither you, nor papa, nor Steenie, for days and days. Grandpapa is dying, they say, and the house is awfully gloomy. He still does not allow mamma to enter his room, and she is so irritable and nervous there is no pleasing her. I can do nothing about poor Martha, and I have such heart-broken letters from Steenie. This is to ask you to have the poor boy at your dear house and comfort him all you can.

"Your miserable

"SYLVIA.

"P.S. Mamma has a horrid man here constantly. You know him; he is an Englishman, with a prospective title, mamma says. She is trying to force him down my throat; but I can at least keep my mouth shut, and he can scarcely marry me if I do not open my lips to give my consent, can he?"

The other note, from Murray Van Vorst, was even shorter:

"DEAR MRS. PENDEXTER,—

"If you are disengaged to-morrow afternoon at half-past five, will you see me a few moments?

"Yours faithfully,

"MURRAY VAN VORST."

She laid down the two sheets, and glanced at the clock on the mantel.

"He will be here in five minutes," she murmured, and rose, going to her dressing-table, before which she stood, arranging minute details of what appeared already a finished toilette. She started like one caught in a flagrant offence when, presently, Maule knocked; and as he announced Mr. Van Vorst, the quick color of a blushing school-girl flushed her delicate skin.

"I will be down directly," she said, without turning her head, for she was solicitous lest the apparent consciousness of her look should betray her. "And, Maule, I am not at home to other visitors this afternoon," she added, still assuming to be occupied with some object upon the table before her.

She dallied a little after the man departed, fidgeting without apparent purpose about the room, straightening here a table-cover, there a bit of drapery, replacing a chair that had been drawn from its usual position, and taking up and laying down again various ornaments upon the mantel and desk, in the aimless, absent-minded fashion of one who seeks merely to gain time. Finally, she cast a last glance at the mirror, mechanically smoothed the already smooth hair above her small ears, and then, still with that girlish blush on her face, trailed out of the room and across the hall-way until she gained the broad staircase. At the top of this she halted again; then, rallying herself upon her irresolution, she took her courage in both hands and deliberately placed it upon her timorous heart, descending the staircase with a firm, swift step that no longer faltered until it had brought her to her destination.

Her footfall made so little noise in its passage that she perceived her guest before he took note of her coming. He was leaning against the chimney-piece, gazing intently into the heart of the burning logs. A gentle light came into her eyes as they fell upon him; soft, brooding pity, earnest wistfulness, deep sympathy and regret, filled them with indescribable tenderness and longing as they dwelt solicitously upon his preoccupation. For the expression of Van Vorst's face, caught thus unawares, was one of haggard wretchedness and dejection. Ordinarily he was on guard to conceal all such indications, for he was a proud man, and it would have but increased the discomfort of his position to let others suspect how extreme it was. Now, however, believing himself alone, his visor was up, and the abject despondency of his spirit spoke loudly from his attitude, from the downward curves of his face, and from those perpendicular lines between the brows.

She stood for a moment in plain view, had he happened to glance up, and watched him. Then, letting the mask of mere conventional interest drop over the special emotion in her countenance, she moved forward and addressed him as a woman greets an ordinary acquaintance.

He made no pretence of introducing his errand by commonplace preliminary phrases irrelevant to it, but plunged at once *in medias res*, stating boldly, without circumlocution, the reason which had brought him thither by special appointment.

"I am come to thank you—" he began, and then interjected with

a gruff sound that could scarcely be called a laugh, so hollow was it, "Good God ! to thank you !—as if I could ever even begin to express gratitude for such kindness as you have shown me ! To acknowledge, let me say, an appreciation which I cannot put in words, of what you have tried to do for me,—and to bid you good-by."

He had held out his hand to her in greeting, but the words that accompanied the gesture restrained her from responding to it. Vaguely the idea suggested itself to her that to place her hand in his would be to acquiesce in the separation his speech proclaimed to be imminent. Her eyes grew large and apprehensive, and the delicate pink in her cheeks, that had given her so girlish an appearance, whitened out to the significant pallor of a sorely stricken woman.

"Good-by?—good-by?" she questioned, stammering a little over the reiteration. "Good-by for what?—for how long?"

Van Vorst turned from her to the fire. The unmistakable emotion in her face was breeding in his unwilling mind a suspicion which would long since have been begotten in the breast of a vainer man. Was it possible that all that wonderful kindness and consideration which she had shown him since his liberation had been instigated by a less impersonal motive than that of a far-reaching and almost divine charity ? The thought, merely in its passage through his mind, shook his very soul. For an instant, gazing silently into the fire, he cherished it, then put it resolutely from him, as an honest man flouts temptation, and replied to her in an even, tranquil voice.

"I am going away, Mrs. Pendexter," he said. "I am going to beat a cowardly retreat. There is no use in my trying to face life here in New York, where every street Arab knows my history and every crook has a right to look upon me as a pal. I've tried to put the past behind me and assume that my punishment has wiped out my—the offence which stands against my name ; but it is useless. The fact of my imprisonment glares me in the face at every turn."

He had tried to make his speech unemotional, for he had no wish to provoke her sympathy further, but the bitterness of his experience would escape in accent and intonation.

"The decision is a sudden one." The words were uttered in a very low tone, as if the speaker's vocal strength were scarcely at her full command.

"Not very. It has been forming itself from the outset."

"You have made many friends since—"

He relieved her of the awkwardness of concluding the sentence.

"Friends, no ; acquaintances, yes. Mrs. Pendexter, my old friends, who might have done much for me, have not rallied about me. I do not blame them, not in the least, but their unanimous defection has been rather—well, trying. My new acquaintances, those with which your goodness has supplied me, tolerate me, but their quality does not satisfy my requirements. It is plain to me that, shorn of my money and your—patronage" (this with a swift smile that had no bitterness in it ; he rejoiced in his obligations to her), "they would fall away and leave me stranded and desolate." He broke off abruptly, and turned his gaze upon the fire ; then he wheeled suddenly around again toward her,

speaking rapidly and to the point. "Mrs. Pendexter, since my return to New York not a man has ever invited me inside his club, much less offered to put my name up for membership. Are you aware how plainly that omission marks my social status?"

She made no reply, only drew in her breath sharply and dropped her eyes to the floor. Van Vorst, man-like, had by this time forgotten his determination to spare her, in the selfish comfort of pouring out his soul to one who was so deeply interested in his troubles.

"Great heavens!" he went on, squaring his back against the mantel and facing her directly, "if you could know the sort of creature that condones my past for the sake of the money he may induce me to squander! It is a creature that a woman thinks a man, and cultivates and makes much of, but that his own sex knows to be a cad, a worse than villain, a sort that no gentleman, even if felony had robbed him of the title, would consort with, although he had no other acquaintance on all God's earth. It is from such as these, Mrs. Pendexter, I fly."

"And you go—where?"

He took a coin from his pocket.

"Heads or tails," he said; "Europe or Asia," and flipped it into the air, glancing at it as it fell again into his open palm. "Tails—Asia, then," he continued. "What is it that fellow in Tennyson says, 'I shall take some dusky woman, she shall rear my savage race'? I could do it, you know. I am free to marry if I wish. Perhaps in uncivilized countries the crime that has made me an outcast here may be considered the virtue of a hero."

She appeared not to be listening to his last words. The expression of her face showed her thoughts to be introspective. But the flippant syllables had made some aural impression, for she repeated a portion of them as she rose from the seat she had taken, and came forward. She was quite close and immediately in front of him when she finally spoke, not impetuously as if carried away by impulse, but seriously and with grave weight and emphasis.

"The crime which has unjustly made you an outcast has, even in this land, made you a hero in some eyes," she said, gazing steadily at him, with her beautiful head raised as a queen might lift hers when bestowing a meed of honor upon a victor.

A sharp thrill seemed to go through the man on whom her shining glance rested. His face grew as white as her own, and he bent a little forward, accosting her hoarsely in a voice unlike his own.

"What—what do you mean?" he asked, breathlessly.

She raised her head higher yet, and her proud, sweet smile gave rare beauty to her face.

"I mean," she replied, speaking the words as if they had long been a precious, unique possession of her own and she regretted parting with them, "I mean that no one who knows you truly, Murray Van Vorst, knows you as I have come to know you, could believe you capable of committing a felony. Such would feel assured, as I do, that you have sacrificed yourself to shield another."

They stood speechless a moment, looking intently into each other's eyes. In those of the woman there was love beyond disguising, and a

tender satisfaction in her own courage. In those of the man there was the assurance her heart coveted, besides the grateful appreciation of an ill-treated hound that has received an unlooked-for caress. There was in them, also, the proud consciousness of integrity, for the first time in many years uprearing its head loftily, without disguise. After a few seconds of this wonderful mutual regard, he stooped and took her hand in his, saying simply, "I thank you," and would have raised it to his lips, but the little tremble in it and the magnetism of its touch overcame his most determined resistance. He paused, looking at her in passionate indecision and uncertainty. She made the slightest movement, it could scarcely be called a motion, so slight it was, but rather a sign of yielding and invitation. His tall frame shook, he swayed a little toward her, and the next moment he had her in his arms, her head was on his breast, and her faithful, loyal eyes were looking into his with such love and confidence as made him for the instant forgetful of the disgrace that attached to him.

Almost immediately he remembered himself, and would have put her from him; but she would not allow it. Clinging to him with beseeching arms, she held the divine in him subservient to the human.

"You love me, Murray?" she whispered, for she knew from what cause his reluctance sprang. "Tell me so: you have said you are free to do so."

He made no answer, only tightened his embrace.

"Tell me," she pleaded. "Murray, ask for my love, since you may."

Then the splendid confidence of the woman touched deeper springs within him than those of mere brute passion, and, though groaning audibly, and inwardly cursing the necessity that constrained him, he put her from him, turning aside to bury his face in the arm he had laid along the mantel.

"I have never said I was free to ask it," he replied, "never. I have never thought it, even."

She fell back, with wide and wondering eyes, and sank into the chair behind her.

"I thought the law had freed you wholly," she cried, brokenly. A swift, burning blush spread over her face, for it seemed to her now that she had committed a horrible, a most inexcusable and unwomanly action in offering herself to him.

He discerned the shame and wounded modesty in her tone, and raised his face.

"And so it has," he responded,—"from her. But the same law that loosed me from my marriage bond restrains me with honorable scruples from allowing any woman whom I respect to become my wife. What man would ask a lady to share a dishonored name? I should be unworthy your love were I capable of asking you to give it to me."

She rose again impetuously to her feet, her face once more radiant and glowing with love and tender pride in his honor.

"Then do not ask it," she cried, holding out her beautiful hands to him. "Let me bestow it unasked, as a free, spontaneous gift.

Take it, Murray; it is yours,—all the love of a woman's heart that has never known love before. Will you have it?"

He made no answer, but stood looking at her with such eyes as a man about to lay his head upon the block might fix upon a distant rider galloping toward him with a possible pardon. There was no color in his face, no expression in any feature but the eyes; these alone showed the strength of the struggle between desire and abnegation that was going on within him. Whiter, whiter grew the pallor of his face; sterner, sterner the rigidity of its lines; and the stillness in the room made the breathing of both distinctly audible. Then, abruptly, he turned his back upon those supplicating hands and walked with quick strides away from the temptation that menaced his honor. At a distance, he wheeled about and answered her.

"No, no; I will not," he replied. "You can never know, it is impossible for any one who has not suffered as I have to know, what courage it takes to refuse this that you offer me. But, whatever else my faults, I hope to God I am no coward, to take advantage of your love and confidence."

She was no whit less brave than he. She felt that on this stake rested all the hope and happiness of her future; and she was willing to play high rather than lose it. She moved swiftly across the room until she stood close beside him.

"Murray," she said, "do you love me?"

He raised a hand, deprecating further torture.

"Don't!" he cried. "Oh, for God's sake, spare me! I am only human, after all!"

She smiled in triumph. It was her wish to tempt him beyond his strength.

"You do; I know it. Well, then, what does the rest amount to? My position is assured. The man who becomes my husband may have *entrée* into any club or drawing-room in America. Your lot need not be among the scavengers of society; the elect shall delight to honor you."

"And you would have me stand in such debt to you! Even a man's wife may not be his creditor to that extent. I could not, so burdened, stand upright before the world. I should soon grow to bend and shuffle in my walk; before long even you would learn to despise me."

"Never! Murray, you are over-sensitive, over-scrupulous."

"Neither. I am a man of honor, despite the fact that I have been a felon; that is all."

"You have never been a felon; confess it."

"The law has said so. Its verdict suffices."

"For those who do not love you. Not for Sylvia and me."

She suddenly abridged the short distance between them, and, before he suspected her intention, had seized his hands and had drawn his arms about her, while she laid her head upon his breast. Thus holding him at complete disadvantage, she turned her soft glance upward to his face, seconding her entreaty with the passionate pleading of her eyes.

"Murray," she whispered, with fast-beating heart, for she felt that

if this desperate venture failed her cause was indeed lost, "tell me who it was for whom you sacrificed more than your life."

He stood, dumb and inert, suffering her embrace, but not returning it. The muscles that longed to clasp her to him were constrained by his will to remain lax and limp, even in contact with so great temptation.

"Tell me, tell me, Murray. It is my due. Who has a nearer claim upon you than I? With whom should your most intimate secrets be shared, if not with the woman who returns your love with, oh, my beloved, with all her heart and soul?" She felt him tremble in her clasp, and believed she was forcing his determination. "Murray," she continued, "you say my faith in you has been exceptional: shall it not have even this reward?"

His arms grew suddenly tense about her, and she exulted. Under the dark moustache that now shaded them, she saw his lips tremble. She waited in dread suspense, fearing, hoping, dreading, but loving—oh, loving and pitying, beyond and above all other sensations. Presently he spoke, slowly, and with great deliberation.

"What good would it do you to know? What purpose should I serve in sharing my wretched secret with you? Would you, could you, guard it as I have done?"

The earnestness and gravity of his gaze compelled her to truth. She had not questioned him thus through mere feminine inquisitiveness. She had no longer curiosity on this subject, since she had come to feel a deeper and more personal interest in him. Her faith in him was all-sufficing to her love. The day when she had idly speculated upon his guilt or innocence was long past. But she had a passionate desire to see him cleared of an offence of which she knew him to be innocent; to see him reinstated in that public opinion which is the atmosphere of society. She could not deny that this was the motive of her interrogation. She shook her head.

"No," she murmured, candidly; "no, I could not."

"Then why would you know it?"

"To clear you before men."

He smiled grimly. "That I could not allow."

"Why?" she broke forth, passionately. "Why? why? Murray, do you not see that it is not yourself only you are sacrificing to this unknown Moloch? Do you not see that you are making offering also of Sylvia and me? Are you sure that you have a right to do this? Is the altar upon which you are rendering up so many lives a worthy one?"

She had withdrawn herself from his embrace, and, as she put the question to him, earnestly and seriously, she stood with her hands both laid upon his shoulders, regarding him with eyes that were of almost judicial severity. He made a quick, impulsive motion, and caught her again to him.

"No, no, no!" he exclaimed. "My God! it is not a worthy one, Charlotte. It is wholly unappreciative and careless of the sacrifices I have made it; and yet—and yet—I have no choice but to continue them."

He held her close, and kissed her many times. She had conquered him up to a certain point; beyond that he stood firm and resolved. He bent his head and pressed his cheek against hers; with tender touch he smoothed the ruddy locks back from her white brow; with covetous eyes he scrutinized every line and feature of her face. With his whole soul he worshipped this fair woman who had so frankly shown her faith in him, a proscribed outcast. Then, reluctantly but firmly, he put her from him and again turned aside. He went to a window, and stood, with unseeing eyes, gazing into the street. She, feeling that the end of all things was approaching, passed over to the fire, and, with a hand upon the mantel where his arm had lain, stood looking into the flames.

Maule knocked, and asked if he should serve tea. She said no, and he retired, closing the door again behind him. A few moments more passed, and then Van Vorst came toward her, with outstretched hand. He had regained control of himself. His face wore its customary expression of hopeless resignation.

"Good-by," he said. "I shall write you. I may, may I not?"

"You are really going, then?" she asked, lifting a despairing glance to his.

"I must. You cannot wish to condemn me to such petty torture as each day in New York inflicts. It is more than a supreme inquisition."

"But you go into complete exile and the worst kind of isolation,—that shared by strangers."

"I have been ten years qualifying for the endurance of it."

Then, overcome by the thought of the cruel past that lay behind him, and the dreary expatriation and solitude to which he was consigning his future, she turned her head aside to hide the tears which rolled down her cheeks, while her frame shook with heavy sobs. Van Vorst sprang forward, and put his arm again about her.

"Charlotte! Great God! don't make the path of righteousness too hard for me to tread, my darling!" he cried, drawing her to him until her head rested once more upon his breast.

As ill luck would have it, Maule had temporarily relinquished his duty of answering the door-bell to a footman, forgetting to direct his substitute to employ the formula of exclusion to any guests that might present themselves. In consequence of this oversight, the drawing-room door was at that moment thrown open, and Martin uttered an announcement that produced greater effect upon his mistress and her visitor than if he had exploded in the room a dynamite bomb.

"Mrs. Yorke," he said, at the same time drawing back to allow that lady to enter.

She came effusively forward, traversing the considerable distance that intervened between the door and the fireplace before which her hostess stood, with rustling skirts and swift movement, her near-sighted eyes screwed up narrowly that they might better focus the occupants of the room. She was a tall woman, thin, excepting where meagreness could be disguised by art, with touches of color skilfully laid upon a naturally pale skin, myopic eyes of a greenish-gray shade,

and an exceedingly well adjusted mass of acquired auburn hair, upon which a very modish toque, of a design suitable to her daughter's years, rested jauntily. She wore a very rich and elegant calling-costume of costly velvet and fur, and presented a most effective and striking *tout ensemble*. It was only when one was close enough to her to penetrate the flattering medium of the black-dotted veil of white illusion, which softened her features and gave delicacy to her complexion, that the fine net-work of lines, here and there, about the eyes and mouth particularly, deepening into actual wrinkles, became apparent. At a certain range and to the casual observer she presented the appearance of a very youthful woman,—almost of a girl, indeed.

"Ah, Mrs. Pendexter," she exclaimed, approaching, with a hand gloved in pearl-colored kid extended in greeting, "so glad to find you at home!"

Her voice, keyed to a suavity that one felt to be adopted, suddenly, in conclusion, took on an unmusical edge. Her short sight had discovered who was Charlotte Pendexter's companion. Also she had perceived that both these persons upon whom she had intruded were making desperate efforts to conquer some recent powerful emotion and present to her gaze an aspect of ordinary composure and conventional indifference.

"Excuse me, I am *de trop*," she continued, abruptly, and with no further attempt to disguise the natural sharpness of her voice. "Your servant must be held responsible for my malapropos entrance. He was at fault in admitting me."

A woman of better breeding and greater self-command would never have allowed her temper so to betray her annoyance. The situation was an embarrassing one, but had the intruder been of different calibre she might have conquered it gracefully and with dignity. The fact was, Cynthia Yorke's temperament was a quick and violent one, and she bore two grudges against Mrs. Pendexter, both of which touched her most intimate feelings very closely. One of these, arising from Charlotte's collusion with Stephen Lennox in an attempt to frustrate her own ambitious designs for Sylvia's future, she had proved, by her daughter's own confession, to be well grounded. The other, rooted in Mrs. Pendexter's rumored espousal of the cause of the husband she herself had cast off, and her currently reported encouragement of Van Vorst's devotion, was now suddenly strengthened by incontrovertible evidence. Her sensitive temper was not proof against a double attack.

Her obvious anger and sneering innuendo restored Mrs. Pendexter more quickly than an attempt to pass lightly over the awkwardness of the situation would have done. She lifted her head haughtily, and met her guest's flaming glance frigidly.

"Quite the contrary," she said, with distant courtesy, but as smoothly as if no *contre-temps* existed. "Your visit is most opportune. Mr. Van Vorst"—with a wave of the hand in his direction and an interpolated "Mrs. Yorke" by way of introducing two persons who had once borne to each other the closest of all relations—"is just leaving. Your visit insures me against solitude. Pray be seated."

She turned, as she spoke, to Van Vorst, naturally, easily, with outstretched hand.

"Since you must go," she said, "good-by."

Van Vorst bowed over her hand and turned, inclining his head with the formal courtesy of a stranger toward the other woman. The absolute ceremony with which he treated her nettled Cynthia Yorke's irascible and already provoked spirit. She felt impelled to arrest his departure, to demonstrate to these two, in some direct and explicit fashion, how she contemned them; to mortify the woman before her lover, and to humiliate the lover before the mistress of his affections.

"One moment, sir," she interposed, hastily. "I did not anticipate meeting you here, despite the many rumors which associate your name with"—she cast an ugly, vindictive smile at Charlotte—"Mrs. Pendexter's. One instructed in the traditions of our best society, of which our hostess is so charming and eminent a member, places slight confidence in reports which indicate that the lofty Pendexter pride would permit a member of its order to seek affiliation with—pardon me—or ah—you understand!"

She shrugged her shoulders with an inexpressibly insulting gesture, and lifted her eyebrows significantly.

Charlotte Pendexter started and would have spoken, but Van Vorst deliberately placed himself in front of her, and took upon his own shoulders the burden of the interview.

"It was my intention to withdraw, madam," he said, contemplating the enraged woman with a glance which would have abashed any other than her, "but, since it seems your purpose in coming hither is to insult the lady whose house you have invaded, I shall remain to protect her from your attacks."

The malicious smile in Cynthia Yorke's eyes deepened.

"That is well," she returned. "My errand, after all, had chiefly to do with you, and I can now seek the information I desire at the source, instead of through even so charming a channel." She emphasized her allusion by an ironical toss of her head toward Charlotte. "I had need of your address."

"I cannot imagine for what reason."

"Because it was required, and for the past three months it has lost the stability which characterized it for ten years."

The thrust, delivered in the presence of the woman he loved, stung the man to the quick. Charlotte Pendexter, standing behind him, failed to catch the look laden with meaning which sped from his eyes to what remnant of heart might yet remain in the breast of her who had been his wife. But his words were distinctly audible.

"Ten years," he repeated, enunciating every syllable clearly and sharply. "Yes, for ten years you had good reason to know where you might find me should you have need of me. Ten years! It is a long price to pay for a mere youthful error of judgment: do you not think so?"

Mrs. Yorke flushed, but in an instant recovered her *aplomb*. She quite understood him to refer to the mistake he had made in the choice of a wife, but this only provoked her to greater desire for retaliation.

She saw how his words might be twisted to his own prejudice, and she had such confidence in him as to believe that, though her taunts might provoke him to retort in veiled allusions intelligible to her alone, she might goad him to death before he would avenge his wrongs, publicly, at her expense. She gave a little hollow, heartless laugh, mocking and intensely irritating. It caused Charlotte to clinch her hands until their pointed nails wounded her delicate flesh.

"An error of judgment?" she repeated. "We are indulgent to our own crimes."

"We are, indeed," he agreed, hastily. Then, forgetting every circumstance of his surroundings save this, that he was face to face with the woman who had ruined his life and whose relentless vanity was still persecuting him, he added, cuttingly, and with unmistakable point and meaning, "Sometimes we refuse to acknowledge them at all, even to the extent of allowing others to suffer for them."

She had gone too far; she had aroused the devil that underlies the divine in every nature. She recognized her error the instant she spoke, before he opened his lips to reply. His self-restraint had yielded to too great provocation. For once the tide of pent-up feeling had its way; but regret followed hard upon it, and he repented his words even before they died away upon the air. He would have given a million dollars gladly to recall them, when he realized what result they had effected. He lashed himself for a cur, a scoundrel, a villain, to have permitted any amount of provocation to induce him to expose that wretchedly attainted honor which he considered it his duty to shield, even from its own weakness and sin.

He turned swiftly, with crimson face, as he heard a quick cry behind him. He threw out his arm as if to hold back the woman who, with glowing cheeks and fiercely reproachful eyes, was moving forward with an impetuous rush to confront Cynthia Yorke.

"Wait! wait!" he cried. "Charlotte, you are mistaken; you have not heard aright. It was of another matter we were speaking."

But she paid him scant attention. She smiled incredulously at his words, and continued to advance without pause, until she stood opposite Mrs. Yorke. From head to foot she scanned her, with deliberate, crushing scorn, and the silence which preceded her speech was more eloquent of her contempt and loathing than the speech itself.

"So it was you!" she finally exclaimed, in measured, disdainful accents. "It was to shield you he did this thing! A woman had need to be well-nigh a goddess, it seems to me, for a man to make utter sacrifice of the ten best years of his life for her sake. And you—ah! I had forgotten! you are my guest; I am not at liberty to express my opinion of you."

She turned abruptly aside, as if she could no longer bear the sight of the face and form she confronted. With a quick gesture, she stretched out both hands to Van Vorst.

"Mrs. Yorke," she said, as Murray took them and held them closely in the grasp of one of his large palms, "you have taunted me with shirking, through pride, an alliance with the man I love. Let me tell you, now, that before I had any reason, save that of my own

intuitions, for believing Murray Van Vorst an unjustly persecuted man, I had such faith in him as to beg him to marry me. He was too scrupulous to listen to my entreaties. Now I ask him once again, here in your presence, to crown my life with the greatest honor it has ever received." She transferred her regard from Cynthia Yorke to that lady's former husband, and there was sweet humility as well as proud supplication in her look as it rested upon him. "Murray Van Vorst," she said, with no bashful hesitation, but with free, solemn utterance, "will you have me, Charlotte Pendexter, for your wife?"

It was an intensely dramatic moment. The deepest, strongest passions of humanity were depicted on the faces of the little group. There was sublime devotion on that of Charlotte Pendexter; there was the desire of a man for the woman he loves, battling with the scruples of a gentleman for the honor he respects, on that of Van Vorst; there was hatred, there was revenge, there were malice and all uncharitableness, upon that of Cynthia Yorke, as she bent involuntarily forward in her eagerness to discover what should be the result of Charlotte's appeal.

A cloud of disappointment settled upon her brow as his decision issued unhesitatingly, and with absolute finality, from Van Vorst's lips. She would have had him accept the offer made him, feeling assured, through her intimate knowledge of his character, that less happiness would ensue to him as the outcome of a victory gained through a breach in his honor than by defeat won from the preservation of his integrity. She was likewise convinced that a marriage which the world would consider a *mésalliance* must before long be productive of regret and dissatisfaction to the proud spirit of Charlotte Pendexter.

Van Vorst raised one delicate hand to his lips, and then dropped both from his clasp, gently, reverently.

"It is impossible," he replied. "You have honored me beyond anything I have ever dreamed of, Mrs. Pendexter, and I have no words at command in which to thank you. But the name I bear is fit for no woman's wearing,—least of all for yours." He faced Mrs. Yorke. "Now, madam," he said, "will you allow me to conduct you to your carriage?"

She made no reply, but proceeded to leave the room. He followed a few paces behind her. On the threshold she paused, and accosted him, in a hard, defiant tone.

"After all," she remarked, "I have not accomplished my errand. What is your address?"

"I reserve to myself the privilege of retaining that," he replied. "I have no desire to enter into communication with you."

She made a contemptuous gesture with her hand.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "you need not fear that. It is not for myself I ask it."

His heart leaped. Was she going to allow Sylvia to come to him openly, instead of meeting him clandestinely? Life might yet hold some compensations, after all.

"For whom, then?" he asked, in a lighter tone.

"My father is dying, and would have it." She spoke sullenly, as if she held her father's wish in disfavor.

"Your father?"

"My father. Strange, is it not?"

"Most strange!" He reflected an instant, holding the door open for her to pass out; then he continued, "I think I will reserve the right to withhold it from him also. I have paid the debt he thought I owed him, with interest. There is no need for fresh communication to be opened between us. Tell him so."

A gleam of satisfaction glittered in the myopic eyes. The two passed from the room, and Charlotte was left alone.

CHAPTER V.

"I TELL you, mamma, I will never marry this Englishman, never. If you are setting your heart upon my making some grand match, you may as well abandon the idea, for—I do not wish to seem disobedient or disrespectful, but I shall never be the wife of any man, unless it is my cousin Stephen."

"Then you will die an old maid."

"There are worse fates."

"But few worse failures. A spinster is a social abortion."

"I would rather be such than part of that hideous social duality, a wretched marriage."

Mrs. Yorke shrugged her shoulders contemptuously.

"There is no need for such a thing as a wretched marriage to exist," she replied. "No marriage need be wretched simply because of incompatibility. If there is money enough, a woman has ample compensations for mere sentimental dissatisfaction."

"What are they, mamma?"

Mrs. Yorke leaned back in her chair and raised from the châtelaine at her side a tiny silver box, which she proceeded to open. Before she lifted the lid, however, Sylvia sprang forward and intercepted the action, kneeling at her mother's side and gazing affectionately and deprecatingly up into the lustreless eyes.

"Don't, mamma; please don't," she entreated. "You know they are so bad for you."

But the elder woman shook off the small hand impatiently.

"Nonsense, Sylvia," she responded. "If your head troubled you as mine does—"

"But there is Dr. Flint's medicine, mamma. Let me get it; it is so much better for you."

Mrs. Yorke let the little box drop back again.

"Well, well, child," she acquiesced, impatiently, "get it, then."

A look of relief chased the anxious expression from the girl's eyes. She rose quickly and kissed her mother's brow.

"Thank you, mamma," she murmured, and departed with hasty step to fetch the anodyne.

As the door closed behind her, Mrs. Yorke again took up the box, and, quickly lifting the cover, conveyed two of the small, white tablets

it contained to her mouth, with a surreptitious movement which indicated a consciousness of guilt.

"Medicine!" she murmured, contemptuously; "there is nothing to take the place of morphine. Compared with it, everything else is like so much water."

She dropped her head back and closed her eyes. By the time Sylvia returned with the phial, the wan look had disappeared from her mother's face, a faint flush had crept under the skin, her eyes were brighter, and she looked quite restored and refreshed.

"The attack has passed off, Sylvia," she observed. "You may put the bottle here on the table, where I can reach it should the pain come back."

Sylvia glanced penetratively into the face before her. Then, expressing no gratification at her mother's relief, she fulfilled the bidding with set lips and frowning brow. She knew what had happened during her absence as well as if she had been omniscient. That constantly exercised habit of evasion and prevarication sorely taxed her daughterly love. She could not help despising her mother when she practised it. She went back to her embroidery, her thoughts dwelling upon the subject of lying, dissimulation, and deceit.

Two days had passed since Mrs. Yorke paid her visit to Charlotte Pendexter. She returned home that afternoon in so uncomfortable and irritable a frame of mind that it was apparent to Sylvia that something had happened to provoke and antagonize her. What that something was, she naturally had no means of ascertaining; nor was it possible for her even to form a conjecture remotely approximating the truth. Although her mother's mood had affected her more or less, as we must all respond in some degree to the depression or elation of those who surround us, yet Sylvia had been too greatly preoccupied with her own concerns to dwell at length upon the cause of the maternal disquietude. For the very next morning there had come to her, through the mail, a letter containing tidings which much afflicted her. It was necessary for her to broach the subject of this letter to her mother, in order to obtain her consent to the interview which it was the main object of the letter to secure; although the girl had fully determined that if this consent were withheld she would act without it, for her ardent attachment to her father refused to permit him to set forth upon a prolonged journey into distant countries, whence he might never return, without a leave-taking. How best to introduce the matter had occasioned her long and serious deliberation, which up to the present moment had been productive of no satisfactory results. Now, however, as she resumed her seat by the window and gathered up her work, a sudden disgust, an intolerable loathing of the maternal methods of evasion, took violent possession of her, and fired her with a strong resentment that was a very good makeshift for courage, in the accomplishment of her design.

She was a high-strung creature, was Sylvia Yorke, candid, truthful, honest, and open as the day, scorning subterfuge and prevarication as the meanest and most despicable of human qualities, and incapable of making allowance for any obliquity of moral vision. Right and wrong

were clearly defined terms to her ; she was never troubled by any vagueness of outline between them. Fraud and deceit she deemed inexcusable and hateful, and she had never grown indulgent of her mother's careless handling of facts and of her general evasiveness. Of anything worse than this, of deliberate dishonesty of purpose, of actually designed and wilfully determined falsehood and double-dealing, she never for an instant suspected her capable. And it was well, since intimate relationship necessitated their living together, that such was the case. It was hard enough, even as matters stood, for the girl so to regulate her mind and speech as to support a fictitious appearance of congeniality between them. The absolute divergence of her character in its development from that of the mother with whom she had been so closely associated from her birth gave the lie to the oft-quoted assertion that we are the creatures of our environment.

True as the aphorism may be in many cases, in that of Sylvia Yorke it was absolutely false. In no degree had she adapted herself to the surroundings with which her mother had furnished her ; nor had the maternal laxity of principle in any wise contaminated her. She cared little for luxury, nothing for society, preserved a scornful attitude toward fashion, and was as true and upright as she was impulsive and affectionate. Up to the age of ten, she had been the pet and companion of her father. Him she had respected and revered with all her little heart. It had been her unexpressed conviction that her king could do no wrong ; and from that conviction she had never swerved, even when, after long years of uncomprehended and impatiently endured separation, it had finally been explained to her why the bond between father and child had been rudely snapped asunder, leaving her, poor little heart-broken child, wretched and disconsolate beyond anything imaginable by the mature beings who surrounded her, to wonder and speculate and grieve concerning the cause which had robbed her of her beloved comrade and playfellow.

Perhaps the truth never would have been told her had she not resolutely demanded it upon her eighteenth birthday. It was to her grandfather she put the question, actuated by a determination to know the real facts, and having little confidence in any version of them she might be able to extract from her mother. Samuel Yorke, a straightforward, plain-dealing old man, if a somewhat close-fisted and inexorable one, gave her a direct answer to her question. Her father, Murray Van Vorst, had been intrusted with the management of Mr. Yorke's property. Implicit confidence had been placed in him, and he had been given power of attorney to sign his father-in-law's name to any extent and to all documents requiring such signature. He had been living extravagantly, far beyond his means, and was considerably in debt. To relieve himself of the pressure of creditors, he had for some time been drawing false checks upon Mr. Yorke, made payable to himself and signed by himself, as Samuel Yorke's attorney.

The fraud had been running three weeks, and the amount of the embezzlement had reached fifty thousand dollars, before the president of the bank upon which the checks were drawn, suspecting some irregularity from the fact that Van Vorst was so frequently made

payee of checks drawn by himself, paid a visit to old Yorke and disclosed the facts.

"Then," said the stern old man, addressing the girl upon the saddest of all subjects to which a child may be called upon to listen, the subject of a parent's guilt,—"even then, if your father had come forward like a man and confessed his sin, I might have been moved to forgive it and hush the matter up. This, however, he did not choose to do. Like a block of wood he stood while, in the presence of John Ireland [the bank president], I made the accusation. When I had finished, he made neither acknowledgment nor confession, but, like a child whining for its mother, asked to be permitted to see his wife before replying to the charge. Doubtless he hoped to shelter himself behind my daughter's petticoats from the punishment his own dastardly conduct had earned him. It was a cause of rejoicing to me that my daughter stood firm, refusing to be moved from rectitude of judgment by the pleading of a scoundrel. What passed between them I do not know, for their interview was in private; but it is safe to say that the ordeal was a severe one to your mother. She came forth from it a wreck; while he, the villain that had brought such disgrace upon those who had loved and trusted him, gave little sign that he repented his crime."

At this point the old man's recital had been interrupted by Sylvia, who was leaning forward, half out of her chair, in fact, with her fair young face all twisted and distorted by pain and excruciating mental agony. Remember, she had, until now, heard nothing of all this, and the processes of love and adoration had built within her heart an idealized image of heroic mould, before which her soul had been upon its knees in worship all these past years. Her father's name had been tabooed in the household, but the secrecy required of it had only helped on the cumulative worship. Now she whispered, feverishly, "Grandpapa, did he confess his guilt?" and hung breathless on the answer.

A harsh frown contracted old Yorke's brow.

"No," he ejaculated, "he was not man enough to do that."

The girl gave a cry so sharp and joyously exultant that it startled the old man. "Oh! then he denied it!" she exclaimed, joyfully.

But her grandfather cut short her rapture with phlegmatic brevity.

"Nothing of the sort," he growled. "He stubbornly refused to plead either way. 'You have found me guilty of gross fraud,' he said. 'I refuse either to attempt to clear or incriminate myself. Sentence me, and I will accept the punishment you see fit to accord me,'—which was tantamount to confession."

"I do not see it," the girl had returned to this, and a glow of faith and fidelity was in her eyes as she spoke.

Her grandfather gave a grim but indulgent laugh; for this child was the dearest creature on earth to him, and he was tolerant of those little obstinate conclusions of hers, to which she was prone and of which she was tenacious.

"Possibly not," he returned, good-naturedly. "There is an old adage about the blindness of those who do not wish to see. You remember it, eh, Sylvie?"

And so the momentous occasion to which Sylvia had for years looked forward had fulfilled itself. She had learned the facts which had been the theme of her dreams by night and of her speculations by day since that awful moment when, alone with her father in his study for the last time, she had been strained to his heart with a fervor and passion which were then incomprehensible to her, but which she now knew to have been born of renunciation and the pain of parting. Distinct in her memory, for she had treasured them choicely, were the words that had issued from those dear lips, whose pallor and tremulousness had painfully impressed her even then: "My little daughter! My little daughter! Be a good girl; be a good woman. Be truthful; be honest; be true." And then, she remembered, he had taken her little arms and put them close about his neck, and had held her face between his palms and looked and looked and looked into it, with his own so near that she had been well-nigh frightened by over-intimacy with its lineaments.

"Sylvia," he had then said, "will you always remember papa? If they ever tell you he did wrong, remember, my little girl, he has always meant to do what was right."

The girl's mind was vaguely occupied with these past events now, as she sat, with drawn brow and compressed lips, bending over her embroidery. These memories, constantly recurring to her faithful heart, had been especially aroused within a few hours by the reception of that letter of whose contents she wished to apprise her mother. She had so long fruitlessly weighed the matter of introducing the topic that she finally concluded to abandon all attempts at diplomacy and plunge boldly into the subject.

"Mamma," she began, with such abruptness that Mrs. Yorke, who was placidly enjoying the pleasant results of her surreptitious dose, started nervously in her chair, "I want you to recall your injunction forbidding me to see my father."

A white shade stole about the corners of Cynthia Yorke's mouth, a little metallic glitter came into her eyes, and the sharp accents of her voice clove the air like a knife.

"Indeed!" she exclaimed. "You seem to be asserting yourself to-day, my dear. Has anything occurred of late, pray, to disqualify me from directing your conduct?"

Sylvia laid down her work and braced herself for the coming struggle. She knew it would be, in all probability, the most violent and crucial of all the many differences which widely opposing temperaments had wrought between her mother and herself; and, had the stake been of smaller importance, she would have surrendered it rather than enter into so fierce a contention as this she felt to be imminent.

"Yes," she returned, slowly and with weighty deliberation, "I think something has occurred."

"And what, may I ask, is this extraordinary event?"

There was a slight pause. Then, very steadily and with no trace of that heat which sarcasm in an antagonist usually provokes, Sylvia replied, gravely,—

"I have become a woman, mother."

Mrs. Yorke raised her lorgnette to her short-sighted eyes.

"Ah, indeed! How interesting! And I had not observed any marked change in you. Pray rise, child, and let me see if the transition is apparent in your general appearance."

A less sensitive spirit than Sylvia's would have winced beneath the ironical impertinence of look and speech. She flushed, but otherwise gave no sign that her adversary had drawn first blood. As if the mocking words had not been spoken, she went firmly on:

"I have become a woman, and am therefore capable of judging to what extent I shall hereafter obey you and allow you to govern my actions. I should prefer that our views might so coincide as to permit me to remain, what I have always tried to be, a dutiful daughter to you. But if this cannot be, if you forbid my following what my conscience assures me to be a right and proper course, then I must set your commands at defiance and act according to my own decisions. You,"—she hesitated, clasping her hands nervously together and dropping her voice, but enunciating every syllable so clearly that each seemed delivered with emphasis,—"you are not the only one to whom I owe obedience, mamma: my father has a claim upon me which I hold to be fully the equal of yours."

Mrs. Yorke's face was white as death. All evil passions appeared to be centred in her small eyes. The glance she cast upon Sylvia was filled with malevolence. It was evident that this unexpected opposition upon her daughter's part had incensed her beyond measure.

"Do you quite understand what that father is, whose claims you boast?" she asked, sneeringly.

"Quite: a gentleman and a martyr."

Mrs. Yorke started and shot a questioning look, not unmixed with apprehension, at the pale, resolute face across the room. Had Sylvia learned anything? Had she suspicions?—or was her speech merely the outcome of romantic, youthful enthusiasm? She would assume the latter to be the case; she must do so. She laughed scornfully.

"A felon and a convict, you had better say," she corrected, pitilessly.

Sylvia sprang from her seat. Her blue eyes were flaming, her cheeks burning, and her voice trembled so violently that the words she uttered were fairly shaken out upon the air.

"Stop! Stop!" she cried, commandingly, in an imperious tone such as she never before in her whole life had used to any one. "No matter what you think him, you shall not traduce him to me, his daughter!"

She crossed the room with swift steps, and halted only when she stood directly in front of her mother, who had likewise risen in wrath. They faced each other with hostile looks, and the natural antagonism of their characters was plainly indicated by their mutual regard.

"Shall I not, indeed? And who has a better right than I to enlighten you concerning your father? Who has a more intimate knowledge of a man's true nature than his wife?"

"You were never my father's wife!" the girl cried, lost to all

recollection of her filial obligations to her whom she was addressing. "A man's wife is the other part of himself; the woman who shares his sorrows as well as his joys; who reaps the results of his misdeeds as well as of his virtuous actions; whose heart leaps when his rejoices; whose tears fall when he weeps; who would share his exile were he banished, bind up and comfort his wounds were he attacked, and who would cling to and love him through evil as well as through good report. Which of these things have you done? None. The fair-weather partner of a few years of his life you may have been, but his wife in the sight of God—never!"

Her hot eloquence had a pronounced effect. Those clearly articulated, uncompromising truths went home to Cynthia Yorke with surprising force. There were reasons, unsuspected by Sylvia, why her words were like barbed arrows in her mother's breast. Severe as the girl afterward felt them to be, she did not dream even then how they had stung and wounded and rankled where they struck; for, try as she would, Mrs. Yorke had never found it possible to obliterate from her mind the thought of a man suffering voluntary imprisonment for a crime of her own committing. Not that she even now regretted permitting the sacrifice, but the recollection of it had never ceased to harass and disturb her complacency. Therefore it was that Sylvia's weapons of speech were tinged with unimagined venom. In addition to this there was the fact of the girl's rebellion, to inflame her mother's temper. If there still existed in the world any being for whom the woman felt unselfish attachment, that being was the one child who had been born to her, and for whose possession she had been called upon to suffer. Possibly it was the very fact that those agonizing birth-throes had cost her something of self-abnegation, which had endeared to her, above all other living creatures, the object purchased by their means.

It was a matter of pride with her to stand well in Sylvia's sight. She had an unacknowledged regard for her daughter's good opinion, and what scant self-discipline she had ever exercised since the girl reached maturity had been called into action by a desire to retain it. Up to now, if she had not commanded her full respect, she had received enough of it to satisfy the unexacting requirements of her shallow nature. She was one of those women whose habit it is to live in an atmosphere of semi-strife with those about them. Petty internecine warfare, constantly occurring crises of small importance, the transforming of molehills of disagreement into mountains of fretful argument, had made her insensible to fine shades in the matter of filial respect.

So long as Sylvia made no overt manifestation of disrespect or disobedience, she was content to believe her daughterly attitude all that it should be; and Sylvia, hating inharmony and mean contention, was careful to avoid occasions of breeding them. But the spirit of disaffection and opposition, though resolutely crushed down and kept under, had always existed within the girl, and had grown with her growth and matured with her development. Faint indications that it glowed beneath that thin crust of pretended filial reverence which had

been sufficient to mislead the mother's vanity now and then manifested themselves; but never before this had the flames of scornful judgment and recrimination flared actually through the surface. Indeed, scarcely were the words out of her mouth when Sylvia repented them. She was distinctly surprised and shocked by the fierce heat and animosity she had displayed. She, also, had never suspected what powerful reserves of indignant resentment had been gathering force within her during the years since she had come to womanhood. She melted now, as she saw the white, shaken look upon her mother's face, for the latter was confronting a possibility which for ten years she had weakly and shrinkingly refused to contemplate, but which had been brought prominently into view by Sylvia's words,—the possibility that now, the girl being of age and free to choose between her parents, she might make such choice as should leave herself, Cynthia, to a desolate and forsaken old age. No wonder the wretched apology for the principal organ of life, which performed its offices so feebly in her bosom, was stricken and refused to quicken her pulses. No wonder her face was set and drawn and well-nigh livid. Even though the blood be cold, its circulation must be free to preserve equilibrium within the body, and the most selfish nature has some vulnerable point through which the flow of the tide may be attacked and arrested.

Contrite and repentant, believing that her own transgressions had pained and distressed her mother to the degree evinced by her look and demeanor, Sylvia sprang forward and grasped the cold, inert hands in hers.

"Mamma dear," she pleaded, "forgive me; I did not mean to speak so harshly and inconsiderately. I should remember how bitterly you must have suffered, how convinced you must have been of my father's guilt and unworthiness, what a fearful struggle must have taken place in your heart, before you could have broken the holy tie that bound you to him. I do not suppose that any one in all the world can imagine what you have endured, mamma. I have grieved, too,—oh, more than you would believe. For my father's loss alone, even without the conviction of his guilt which was added to your burden, was a terrible affliction to me. But what could my grief or suffering or sorrow be, compared to your agony? I should remember this; I should always remember what it must cost a woman to rupture the most sacred of all relationships. I cannot understand how you could have credited any evidence against him, mamma. It seems to me impossible that you could have been persuaded of his guilt, even though he acknowledged it to you in that private interview before he gave himself up to justice. I would not have believed him even if he had made such a statement under oath. I would even then have suspected that he was shielding some one else. But, since you did believe it, mamma, I should make allowances for your credulity, and pity rather than blame you."

Mrs. Yorke had sunk again into her chair, and Sylvia had thrown herself upon her knees beside it, in the attitude of a petitioner; for not yet had her request been granted. The face of the mother had grown even more pinched and haggard; that of the daughter was a

radiant contrast by virtue of the look of pure exaltation which transfigured it. So full of her subject was the girl, so preoccupied with her own enthusiasm, that she failed to notice the stealthy movement of her mother's hand toward her châtelaine. Not till the small white tablets were being raised to the colorless lips did she realize what the action portended. Then she shook her head, sadly and despondently.

"Oh, mamma!" she sighed reproachfully.

But Mrs. Yorke had been too profoundly stirred by a more moving disquisition to heed this. Sylvia had made two allusions to an act of self-abnegation on her father's part. She felt that she could not rest until she found out what ground the girl had for this conjecture. It was a dangerous conclusion for her to hold, no matter at whom it was aimed, and she must disabuse her mind of it at once and forever. Morphine would lend her the strength necessary to the accomplishment of the task. She scarcely noted the feeble remonstrance, therefore, but reverted directly to the former subject. Her eyes were turned aside as she put her question with its prelude, and her voice sounded very weak and thin; but she controlled herself to speak without apparent emotion.

"You have twice alluded to your father's assuming the onus of this felony as an act of self-sacrifice upon his part, undertaken for the purpose of shielding another. May I ask if your remarkable presumption has any reason for being, and, if so, at whom the finger of your suspicion points?"

She made a valiant effort to preserve an ironical dignity till the last word was uttered, but her voice faltered a little in conclusion, and her thin, nerveless fingers caught at and pinched the folds of her gown where her restless hands lay upon it.

Sylvia shook her head, and exercised a strong command over that traitorous perfunctory affection which she had so much difficulty in constraining to meet the attacks made upon it by her mother's designed malice.

"No," she said. "Nothing has led me to the supposition: it is simply a last resource in an insoluble difficulty."

Relief from intolerable fear took the form of anger in Mrs. Yorke's breast.

"Then I would advise your keeping such far-fetched conclusions to yourself," she cried, irately, pushing Sylvia from her with a repellent gesture. "The world would laugh well at you if you informed it of your belief that a man would subject himself to the vilest calumny and disgrace, would forfeit the good opinion of his fellows, would pay the penalty of the ten best years of his life, would sacrifice his honor—"

"Stop! my father has never done that. His honor remains pure and unsullied, in the eyes of his daughter, at least."

"In the eyes of the daughter upon whom he has brought shame and disgrace!—the daughter whom, as your theory would have it, he sacrificed to some unknown being whose welfare he held to be of greater account than that of wife or child! There is but one sort of creature whose power over a man is great enough to induce such

monstrous and wholesale sacrifice. Perhaps your precious speculations have hit upon such a one as the object of your father's self-surrender?"

A hot wave of shame dyed Sylvia's face as the vile insinuation fell from her mother's lips. One glance she cast at her, a glance so full of rebuke and intolerable disgust and aversion that, even in the throes of that ungovernable rage to which she had fallen prey, the woman winced, recognizing that she had gone too far in her attempts to ward off suspicion from herself; then she dropped her crimson face into her open palms and turned aside, choking with indignation, suffocating beneath a sense of outraged modesty and wounded affection.

For a few moments there was perfect silence in the room. A horrible conflict was waging in Sylvia's heart. She felt herself to have been grossly insulted by the possibility her mother's words had implied; her whole soul was in arms for her father's defence; that weak affection which she had borne her mother, the result of propinquity and of the close relationship with one akin to her by birth alone, had received in this dastardly suggestion a blow from which it was doubtful if it would ever wholly recover. At the moment, the girl felt it had been quite done to death. She was too shocked, too embarrassed, too distressed in all her maidenly sensitiveness, to find it possible to meet her mother's glance. Could she ever again meet it? she wondered, while her heart throbbed tumultuously and her veins seemed to run molten fire. Could she ever again live beneath the same roof with one who had so abominably aspersed her father to her? Could she ever again pretend affection and respect for one who, even had there been grounds for such a theory as that most vile and untenable one, should have shielded her daughter from any suspicion of it, rather than have dangled it in all its revolting nakedness before her eyes?

And the pause gave Cynthia Yorke opportunity for self-communion. What a fool she had been to work the matter up to such a pitch! As usual, how inconsiderate of consequences her quick temper had been! Into what absolute vulgarity of suggestion she had allowed herself to be betrayed by a foolish child's romantic championship of her father's ruined cause! What harm could it have done to let her run the length of her tether? She could have gone no further. Sooner or later she must have come plump up against the blank wall presented by the fact that there was no possible culprit for whose sake Murray Van Vorst would have assumed so heavy a burden as that of disgrace and imprisonment. Presently she began to drum her fingers on the table. She felt the silence oppressive, and the stern rigidity of her daughter's figure made her nervous.

"Sylvia!" There was no response. Mrs. Yorke began to hum, half unconsciously, a refrain without words. It was a sort of nervous habit she had when especially moved or excited, and of all her little idiosyncrasies none, perhaps, was more annoying or irritating to Sylvia. As she hummed, she started on a vague and restless tour of the apartment, having no actual purpose to effect by her wandering, but being impelled to movement by a feeling of ungovernable impatience.

Finally, having failed by this means to allay the unquiet spirit

that made repose impossible to her, she directed her steps to where Sylvia yet stood, immovable as a statue, still plunged in the bitter travail of soul into which that cruel hand, whose natural province it was to ward off suffering from her, even at the expense of wounds gained for itself in the endeavor, had deliberately and deceitfully betrayed her. So wholly preoccupied was the girl with her own grievous troubles, so profound was her wretched abstraction, that she was actually deaf to her mother's address. When, after a while, it was repeated at closer range, she started as if a pistol had been fired at her, and withdrew her hands from before her face, keeping that face, all disfigured and discolored by her tears and anguish, resolutely turned aside and downcast, that her eyes might not meet those which were regarding her with scant sympathy and cynical disfavor. It seemed to her as if all the surface of her body were a net-work of delicate nerves, and that these nerves were all alive and quivering. She shrank involuntarily from exposing them to further assault. But, though she could not bring herself to meet her mother's glance, she compelled her tongue to respond to her salutation.

"What is it?" she asked, in smothered tones, moving over to the window where lay her abandoned work.

"You are acting like a little fool! You boasted just now of being a woman: I had thought you able to confront such unpleasant matters as all women must regard sooner or later. What if your father had relations outside the legitimate bounds of his home? Other men, highly esteemed and honored, have the same. It is no singular or exceptional thing for men to assume such. And if he sacrificed himself to shield a creature who proved herself by crime unworthy even illegitimate regard, why,"—she paused and shrugged her thin shoulders expressively; then, with a short laugh, continued,—"it scarcely becomes me, in the position of a wronged wife, to say it, perhaps, yet it might be fairly considered an act of heroism on his part."

This had been the outcome of her perambulations about the room, the sop to her daughter's wounded feelings engendered by cogitation.

Sylvia, over by the window, had been busying herself in gathering together her shining silks and folding up her work. She dropped everything with an abrupt movement, as her mother concluded, and, with a quick, resolute stride, she swept again across the room, until she stood at her mother's side. With a sudden, impetuous action, she threw out her hands, and laid one on either shoulder of the woman before her, constraining her to meet her glance by a certain irresistible force that manifested itself in her actions. Her own eyes were keen, penetrating, inquisitorial, no longer the eyes of a stricken and humiliated girl, but those of a determined judge bent upon wresting the truth from a witness at all costs.

"Mother," she said, in quick, ringing accents, "you have done a despicable and atrocious thing. You have vilified my father; you have attacked his morality in a spot where I never dreamed of looking for a blemish; you have planted in my heart the first doubt of his integrity that has ever found lodging there. For the first time it has occurred to me that, instead of being a hero and martyr, he may be,

in point of fact, a sinner. You have crucified my love and esteem for him, but they yet live. It lies with you either to restore them to their full strength, or to kill them outright; and one of these two things you shall do now—this moment. Is there truth in what your words implied, or were they a mean calumny? Answer me: had they any foundation whatever, or had they not? Speak! You must and shall."

At that very instant the door opened, and a servant appeared. But Sylvia paid him no heed. Her gaze never quitted its hold upon that of her mother. All the power of her stronger character was compelling the truth from those thin, drawn lips. She gave the sharp shoulders a little shake.

"Speak!" she ordered, "or nod your head. Were they true or not? Yes or no?"

And, like a subject yielding to hypnotic suggestion, Cynthia Yorke shook her head mechanically, muttering at the same time, below her breath, almost automatically,—

"No: they were not true."

Sylvia let go her hold as if she had discovered that she was clasping an adder. The movement was expressive of a scorn and contempt too great for words. With a certain degree of recovered composure on her face, not wholly a look of peace and tranquillity, but an expression far different from that of awful anguish and despair which had so recently characterized it, she turned her back upon her mother and accosted the servant.

"What is it, Jaynes?" she asked.

"Mr. Yorke has sent down word as he wishes to see you, immijate, Miss Yorke."

"Very well. I will go to him at once." And, without another glance at her mother, she followed the man from the room.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD Samuel Yorke certainly looked more like an impersonation of Age hovering at the gate of Death than anything else. As Sylvia entered the chamber, the trained nurse rose from her seat and bowed respectfully to her. Then, after an unimportant word or two, she passed out of the room, leaving the two together.

Sylvia at once approached the bed. She was surprised to see that her grandfather was not lying quite recumbent according to his usual habit, but was bolstered up into almost a sitting posture. His gaunt, lean frame was supported by many pillows, and his eyes, beneath very long and shaggy brows, gleamed forth from their sunken sockets eager and alert with the fires of purpose and mental activity. Upon a table by the bed stood writing paraphernalia, and it at once occurred to the girl that she had been sent for to fulfil the duties of amanuensis. It was the first time she had ever been called upon to render such service, for prior to the illness which had laid him so low the old man had been vigorous and well preserved, amply qualified to attend personally

to his correspondence and affairs. He had learned, at some cost, the lesson of retaining control of his own investments, and since acquiring that lesson he had laid it to heart.

Sylvia leaned over the bed and pressed her lips to the parchment-like brow.

"Dear granny," she said, "how do you feel to-day?"

The old man gave a grunt.

"Oh, so-so, so-so, my dear,—about as well as I shall ever feel again in this world, I suppose." His words came slowly and spasmodically. His breathing was much affected by disease, and this rendered his utterance jerky and rough.

Light had been in large measure excluded from the room, and the semi-darkness and his own failing vision prevented Mr. Yorke from perceiving the signs of recent emotion on Sylvia's face. He remarked a certain tremulousness and strain in her voice, however, for it was this organ alone which had made any melody in his life, and he knew its variations as a connoisseur of violins knows the notes and vibrations of a cherished instrument. He grasped her hand and drew her to him, peering into her sweet, disturbed face as it neared his own.

"Has she been at you again, pussy?" he jerked forth, in tones which the girl knew were intended to imply tenderness, but which sounded only a little harsher and more raucous than usual.

She nodded with assumed carelessness.

"Yes; we have had a little tiff, but it's all over now," she replied.

The old man looked inquiringly at her.

"What about?" he questioned. "Steenie?"

She shook her head.

"Oh, no; nothing in particular," she returned, as if dismissing the subject. "It isn't worth talking about. Now, what can I do for you, dear granny? It looks as if there were letters to be written,"—with a glance at the table.

"Yes,—one; but an important one. I could ask no one but you to write it, Sylvie. It won't take you long, child, and I think it will be a labor of love to you, in more ways than one."

All his sentences were disjointed and the words expelled as if with great effort.

Sylvia smiled. She attached but one meaning to his words.

"Anything I can do for you, granny dear, is sure to be that," she remarked, tenderly.

It was wonderful to see how the harsh rigidity of the old man's countenance relaxed beneath the gentle influence of the girl's affectionate demonstrativeness. It seemed as if a soft hand had passed over his features, smoothing them out and leaving an expression almost of peace upon them.

"Sylvie," he said, "I'm pretty near the edge of the grave. There won't be many to regret me much when I fall over the brink; and I don't wonder. I'm thought to be a hard man, pussy, and a tight one, and there's some truth in what people think of me. It don't trouble me much what folks in general think, but there are one or two I'd

like to make a little apology and explanation to before I go. You're one of them."

The girl, deeply touched, for such a show of feeling was most unusual in the old man, leaned forward and laid her fresh young cheek against his withered one.

"Dear grandpapa," she whispered, "there is no need for that. You know I love you."

Again the rugged outlines of the old face softened with pleasure.

"Yes, I believe it," the laboring voice acquiesced; "but I'd like you to understand me a little, as well. I've had a hard time of it, pussy, all my life. I began with a step-mother who kept me and my father pretty tight under her thumb. I married a woman who was a she—well, I won't speak harsh of your grandmother, Sylvie. I had a daughter who has always been a thorn in my side, who has no more—" His voice was growing thick and indistinct with rising passion. A touch that Sylvia laid upon his hand recalled him to a recollection of whom he was addressing. "Ah, I forgot," he continued, weakly, "you are her daughter. We will let her pass. I had a son-in-law whom I liked, and who seemed devoted to my interests. He—ah, I forgot again; he is your father." He stopped short, panting, his breath coming in quick, short gasps which much distressed Sylvia. After a moment, he went on. "You see I cannot justify myself to you, pussy; it is not possible to do it; and yet, my little Sylvie, it is not wholly my own fault that I am dying here without one soul, except a poor little tender-hearted girl, to regret me when I am gone."

It was inexpressibly pathetic and moving, this plaint wrung from lips that had gone through a long existence making no moan, asking no consideration. The sadness of it, the revelation of a longing for love and sympathy and comprehension which even she, who of all the world cared most for him, had never suspected, touched Sylvia deeply. Quick tears sprang to her eyes and stole down her cheeks. She took the old man's hands in hers, and laid them upon her breast, as she sat beside him on the bed, regarding him with fond surprise and commiseration.

It is singular what strangers we are to those whom we fancy we know most intimately,—how we may live days, months, and years, a lifetime, indeed, cheek by jowl with another, feeling ourselves familiar with his every thought and with all the impulses that govern his actions, believing that we are thoroughly acquainted with all the peculiarities of his temperament, when, of a sudden, some trifling event occurs, and, behold, we stand aghast at our own misconception of a character which, revealed under new conditions in its real aspect, astounds us with strange and hitherto unexhibited phases.

Wonderingly, self-reproachfully,—for, though she had been in his own peculiar way her grandfather's pet, there had never been much overt manifestation of tenderness between them, and she recognized now, at the eleventh hour, that he would have appreciated and valued such,—Sylvia sat gazing with wistful eyes at the wrinkled face, and fondling the shrunken hands between her soft palms. She had not

much to say, passionately as she longed to respond to that hitherto dumb spirit of natural affection which had found such tardy expression in the old man's breast ; for the habits of a lifetime do not yield easily to fresh conditions, and, in spite of his indulgence to her, old Mr. Yorke had ever held his granddaughter at arm's length. But her blue eyes were warm and loving as they brooded over his face, and the sweet sympathy manifest in her look perhaps said as much to the dying man as volumes of protest could have done.

He seemed to fall into a stupor, or fit of reflection, as they sat thus. His eyes were closed, and Sylvia could not divine whether he slept or was simply given over to retrospection. She sat quite still, except for that soothing movement with which she stroked the wasted hands. Presently he lifted his lids, and she saw from the alert look he cast upon her that his faculties had not been slumbering.

"Pussy," he said, "before I die I am going to do something which I think will please you. Can you guess what it is?"

The girl pondered a moment. There were but two matters of consequence to her in which she believed her grandfather's interference could be of real avail. The greater of these, the restoration of her father to his home, she dismissed at once as outside the bounds of possibility. The other, the discharge from prison of the old sewing-woman, Martha Melton, and her reinstatement in the household, an achievement to which she had often begged her grandfather to apply his energies and influence, came more within the realms of the probable. Therefore, with a gleam of expectancy and joy in her eyes, she suggested this conjecture. But Samuel Yorke shook his head, while a grim smile played about the corners of his mouth.

"No ; better than that," he chuckled. "Guess again."

The old man's failing senses were not very acute, but even he could detect the nervous trembling of the fingers that clasped his own. The girl dared not express that other long-cherished wish. She knew how fiercely in bygone days the mere mention of her father's name had wrought upon her grandfather ; and now, when agitation might bring immediate dissolution in its train, she feared to excite him. One other desire, strongly opposed by her mother, lay near her heart, but she had never considered her grandfather's influence as likely to be a co-operative agent in the attainment of this. However, being without other resource, she mentioned it.

"Steenie?" she murmured, doubtfully.

The old man chuckled again.

"No ; neither Martha nor Steenie," he ejaculated, with grim satisfaction. "Isn't there some one else you have worried and fretted about far longer than you have about these two? Hey?—what say?"

For now a rare glow had come over the girl's face ; her hands had stilled their motions and clasped themselves over the fleshless fingers resting upon her throbbing breast ; and, bashfully, as a maiden might mention a lover's name, a single word dropped falteringly from her lips :

"Papa!"

Old Yorke nodded. "Yes, that's right ; your father," he whis-

pered. "See those writing-things yonder, Sylvie? I want you to write a letter to him for me. I want him to come here and see me."

There was no word from her at this: some crises do not permit of speech, and Sylvia's heart was too full for expression. She did not pause to ask herself what this might mean, for what reason her father's prosecutor desired his presence by his death-bed, or what new development had led to this recall. It was enough for her that the man who had banished Murray Van Vorst from beneath his roof, who had consigned him to a living death, who had disgraced him in the eyes of all men, summoned him again to his side before his soul set forth on its pilgrimage to eternity.

With a look of awed and solemn joy, she slid from her position on the bed to her knees beside it and pressed her lips to the hands that had dropped from her breast. Then she hid her face for a moment in the snowy coverings, and when she lifted it again it appeared to the eyes of the old man like the faces of the cherubim, so radiant and glowing was it. He motioned to the table.

"Now, write," he said, and he spoke with increasing difficulty, so that Sylvia grew alarmed, fearing that her agitation had reacted upon him; and she hastened to obey his wishes, imposing great control upon herself as she wrote.

It was a brief letter; merely a courteous request, without explanation of any motive which might prompt it, that, at his earliest convenience, Van Vorst would do the subscriber the very great favor of calling upon him.

"Shall I sign it, grandpapa, or will you do so?" asked Sylvia, as she wrote the last word with lingering care.

The old man raised his right hand and contemplated it. It shook as if palsied.

"No; sign my name, 'by Sylvia'; perhaps that will induce him to come," he said.

She signed it as he bade her, and addressed an envelope. Into this she was about to slip the note, when he stayed her with a quick gesture.

"Pussy," he said, halting between each word, for his breathing was growing more and more labored, as the unusual exertion told by degrees upon the feeble remnant of strength that yet remained to him, "let me look at it. I would like to see what manner of hand you write, child. I believe I have never seen your writing."

She humored him, holding the note, with its firm, clear calligraphy, close to his eyes. He glanced at it, nodding in commendation of its legibility, and, though the room was dim, easily possessing himself of its contents, for from him had Cynthia inherited the myopic vision whose reward is prolonged strength in advancing age, and he had never had recourse to spectacles to repair the deficiencies of waning eyesight.

His glance was about to drop, pleased and satisfied, from the paper, when it suddenly became arrested by the signature. A thrill of recovered energy, caused by intense surprise, passed through him. He started from his pillows, and seized the little sheet in his shaking

fingers, bringing it even closer to his eyes than Sylvia had held it. Thus scrutinizing it, he cried out an order to her in a harsh, peremptory tone.

"Lift up that curtain, child!" he shouted. And, as she obeyed, "Who taught you to write my name like this?" he asked, with such violence that the girl grew terrified, believing that sudden delirium had seized him.

"Why, no one, dear grandpapa," she returned, soothingly. "I have always written like that; it is my natural hand."

He glared at her a moment from beneath his overhanging eyebrows, with such fierce penetration in his look that she became strengthened in her conviction that he had gone suddenly mad, and set about planning a means of diverting him so that she might escape from the room and summon the nurse. But before she could frame a pretext he again accosted her.

"It is your father's hand," he said. "Did he teach you to write?"

"Yes," she responded, still with her mind on a way of escape.

He paused, gazing intently at the paper he continued to hold, which made a little crackling noise as it wavered in his unsteady grasp. Sylvia took advantage of his preoccupation to steal noiselessly toward the bell; but before she had traversed half the distance the harsh voice recalled her.

"Come here, girl," he cried. "I'm not done with you yet." He halted again, but, as she stood once more beside him, he raised his eyes and shot into hers a glance so sharp and inquisitorial that it might have detected subterfuge in the heart of a millstone. "Do you form all your letters as he did?" the old man asked, the words issuing singly, like gasps, from his twitching lips.

Sylvia shook her head.

"No," she said, thinking with what strange suddenness this delirium had overtaken him, and a little shaken by the consideration that the wish to see her father, which she had penned at his dictation, had probably been but a precursor of this frenzied behavior.

"What difference is there?"

"I could never form a capital Y or V as he did," she replied.

He grasped her hand, drawing her to him with such strength and fervor that she was impelled to hold back, fearing him.

"Did he ever employ you to write my name?" he muttered, with deliberate and significant emphasis on each word. And at that question a glimmer of light began to illuminate her grandfather's strange conduct, setting it in more rational proportions before the girl's mind.

"No," she answered, gravely, desisting now from planning further stratagem for evasion. "No," she repeated, "never."

He looked piercingly at her.

"It is too far back," he breathed: "you cannot remember."

"I can," she replied, with decision. "I can recall every circumstance relating to my lessons with him."

He reflected an instant, and the sound of his labored respiration was alone audible in the chamber. Then he looked up at her again, this time even more insistently and searchingly than before.

"Did any one ever employ you to write it?" he asked.

Again she shook her head.

"No one," she answered.

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure," she replied; but this time there was less decision than before in her response. Her devotion to her father's memory had kept alive within her all the most trifling incidents and circumstances of their abruptly ended companionship. She felt absolute reliance upon the fidelity of her recollections as they concerned him; but the fact was, regarding other persons and events her memory was more treacherous. She had often proved its unreliability upon points of minor consideration; so now she spoke with less conviction.

The old man dropped back upon his pillows, spent and exhausted. Sylvia, alarmed by his appearance, sought to dissuade him from allowing his thoughts to dwell further upon the subject, but he gave no sign that he had even heard her words. She stood in indecision beside him, and presently asked if he would allow her to call the nurse, that she might administer some restorative. But he stretched out his hand and clutched her dress, showing that he wished her to remain where she was.

The sight of the wan and haggard face, with its skin like ancient parchment, over which the forbidding ghastliness of approaching dissolution seemed even now stealing; the stertorous breathing, so significant of the supreme effort of a failing heart to perform its functions yet a little while longer; the gray, grisly light of the chamber; the suggestion of a presence, invisible but awful, pervading the atmosphere,—all these made a strong demand upon the courage of the girl, who had never before come within even the shadow of death. She shivered a little, and, had one of sensitive hearing been there, such might have detected a sound like the modified clicking of castanets, as her teeth chattered against each other. But she was of stout heart, and one whom she loved, in the hour of his greatest need, required her. She had no thought of forsaking her post.

Her grandfather had closed his eyes as he sank back into his pillows. Now, watching intently, Sylvia saw the heavy lids open. He fixed her with his glance, and then, raising a tremulous arm, pointed to a mahogany secretary that stood across the room, between two windows.

"Go there," he directed, with great effort. "The second drawer. In a Russia case—you—will—find—papers. Yellow slips—checks. Bring—them—here."

Sylvia leaned beseechingly toward him.

"Dear grandpapa," she entreated, "never mind now. You are too weak. Let it go till by and by, I beg of you."

But he waved her impatiently away.

"I have work to do now," he gasped. "There will be no by and by for me. Go!"

And, so commanded, she reluctantly obeyed. The secretary was an old-fashioned affair, with a bookcase above and desk below. Under the desk were three drawers adorned with curiously wrought handles

of antique brass. The second drawer Sylvia opened, and, according to directions, took from it a sort of wallet of Russia leather, marked with her grandfather's initials in gilded characters. She remembered the wallet perfectly; she had herself given it to her grandfather many years ago, for a Christmas-present, and its familiar aspect awoke lively reminiscences within her. She had no time to indulge in these, however, with that grisly presence stalking so threateningly toward him in whose service she was engaged, and she quickly opened the case in search of those slips which her grandfather desired.

Her heart beat fast, horribly fast. It seemed to rise into her throat and choke her, as she considered what, in all probability, those bits of paper were, and what bitter anguish and suffering they had caused, and what justice might yet be wrought had they the power of speech. She had no difficulty in finding them, for nothing else encumbered the wallet. Four small, oblong strips of thin, yellowish paper, soiled and defaced by contact with many hands, were the sole contents of the case.

Her hands trembled as she withdrew these from their hiding-place, and her fingers held them distastefully, for she regarded them with much the same aversion with which the child of one executed might regard the instrument that had orphaned him. As she drew them forth, an imperious mandate from the bed hastened her reluctant movements:

“Hurry! There is scant time.”

She dropped the wallet back into the drawer, and hastily returned to her grandfather. To him she gave the checks.

He took them with eager fingers, and slipped them apart from each other into a sort of fan-shaped arrangement. Then, with a strong effort, he raised himself erect in bed, his tall, gaunt frame showing its angular proportions beneath his night-shirt. He held the checks out toward Sylvia, with such wonderful control of his muscles that the slips waved scarcely at all in his grasp.

“Look,” he ordered, “look at these! Have—you—ever—seen—these—before?”

A terrible gray pallor was spreading from the old man’s chin to his brow. A pinched look was already sharpening his features. He was fast draining the feeble amount of reserve strength that, less prodigally employed, might have extended his existence for some days yet. All the conserved energy of his being was in the compelling gaze with which his eyes sought to constrain his granddaughter.

She, poor child, had no suspicion of the awful foreboding which consumed him, and which he was requiring her either to confirm or dispel. Little did she suspect, being again convinced that this strange conduct was the result of aberration, that in fulfilling his apparently simple request to examine those small bits of paper she was in reality grasping the hilt of a dagger with which she must inflict irremediable wounds upon both him and herself. Her one and only concern was to humor his mood, and, by so doing, restore him to calmness and composure. Although she knew little of illness, she yet felt assured how exceedingly injurious such unusual excitement must be.

She leaned down until she might perfectly discern the characters

upon the small slips. She had thought one brief glance would be sufficient to allow her truthfully to reply that never before had she beheld them. But as her eyes fell upon the faces of the checks, which had hitherto been unobserved by her, a change, quickly noted by that intent gaze which was riveted upon her, passed over her countenance. Involuntarily, forgetful of the dire need for caution and self-restraint, she stretched out her hand and grasped the shrunken wrist upraised before her. Lifting it unconsciously, for now the condition of her grandfather no longer held pre-eminence in her mind, she brought the withered hand, with its sheaf of checks, up to the level of her eyes.

Suddenly all the chambers of memory seemed unlocked to her inspection. Trivial deeds long forgotten, trifling actions too unimportant to be consciously retained, simple occupations, passing amusements, methods of whiling away the long hours of a dreary day, childish employments that at the time had made but faint impression, —all these hazy recollections, scrupulously garnered by that wonderful storehouse which carefully preserves all sorts and kinds of mental lumber, came clearly before her, opened up to her vision by a few familiar characters traced upon four not over-clean scraps of discolored paper.

How vividly she recalled the various occasions upon which she had filled in those blanks ! It had been a matter of such pride to her to make a faithful imitation of the copy placed before her. She had ruined several of the little slips before satisfactorily accomplishing the result ; but that had been of no consequence, for there was plenty to draw upon in that little red copy-book from which she had been supplied. She had agreed not to mention the matter to her father, as it was understood that when she had wholly overcome her difficulty with the Y's and the V's, and had made a really faithful transcription, it was to be presented to him as a pleasant and gratifying surprise. He would be so delighted, she had been assured, to see that she could write his name and her grandfather's just as well as he did. But, alas ! the presentation had never taken place. Before the troublesome letters were satisfactorily conquered, her father had been taken from her ; and there the matter, so far as she was concerned, had ended. Greater events, an enduring and heart-breaking trouble, had routed such small considerations from her recollection ; and, as the little red book had in some way disappeared, her fruitless endeavors to conquer the rebellious characters sank into oblivion.

She was dreamily dwelling upon all this, wrapped in contemplation of that memory-conjuring sheaf, when a very peculiar sound struck upon her ear and scattered the blinding mists of retrospection. She glanced quickly at the pillows whence the sound had proceeded, and at the same instant let go her grasp of the shrivelled wrist, which fell, heavy and inert, to the bed. With a loud cry, she started forward, for there was a terrible and awe-inspiring look upon her grandfather's face. She would have thought it the face of a dead man, but for the gleaming, agonized eyes, which still retained their hold upon her countenance.

"Grandpapa! Oh, grandpapa, do you hear me?"

Only a slight flicker of the lashes responded to the question. Then the jaw, which had already fallen, regained control of its muscles, and the vocal cords were strung by the still masterful will for one final effort. It was a hollow but perfectly distinct utterance that issued from the drawn lips, a question emphasized by the unconquerable determination to know, in this supreme moment, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"Who—wrote—those—checks?"

Like an automaton the girl replied, "I did."

"Who—instigated—you—to—do—it?"

The final word was scarcely audible. It was little more than a faint rattle, but the dread and apprehension in the expiring eyes were terrible.

Like a flash of lightning cleaving a midnight darkness that has obscured and concealed actual things from view, swift intelligence descended upon Sylvia's mind. An awful look of horror, the shrinking together of all her tender sensibilities, the absolute impossibility of contemplating such a revelation as this that she had suddenly discovered, played miserable havoc with the gentle, girlish beauty of her face. She crouched over the bed; it was as if her knees refused to support her frame. She quivered and shook and trembled from head to foot. Her lips were parched, her throat was dry, her eyes seemed to burn and scorch their sockets.

This could not be! Oh, no, no! Such a thing were impossible! Her grandfather was wandering, mad, insane! It was a death-bed delusion, the hideous fancy of a diseased brain! And then it came over her with convincing suggestiveness that she herself had testified to the truth of this awful thing; that this was no maggot of a decayed intelligence, but the pure germ of truth itself, of positive knowledge, which had lain for years undeveloped within her own mind.

And then, even there in the sacred presence of Death, the girl gave a dreadful cry, that rang loudly through the chamber and caused pity, the pity of Age about to enter into rest for Youth in the stress of battle, to mingle with the anguish of the fast-glazing eyes.

"My mother!" she cried; "oh, no, no! Granny, not my mother!"

She fell beside the bed, crushed by this horror that had descended upon her. The feeble fingers of the old man twitched and made an attempt to creep toward her bowed head. Muscular action was no longer to be commanded, however. The broad, emaciated chest heaved with a long, indrawn breath; and then a faint little sound which conveys unmistakable meaning to accustomed ears was emitted from the throat. After this, all was still.

Mrs. Yorke was passing up the staircase at the head of which her father's apartments were situated, on her way to Sylvia's room, just as the girl's cry broke from her lips. She had been sitting in the library where her daughter had left her, considering how best she could propitiate the girl and wheedle her out of this whim about her father. She had finally concluded that it was necessary, in order to accomplish this desideratum, to make some concessions, and, by indulging her

wishes upon another matter, wean her mind from contemplation of this. Therefore she had resolved to abandon her opposition to Stephen Lennox for the time being, and to permit an engagement to be formed between him and Sylvia. It must not be supposed that, for a moment, she dreamed of considering a marriage between the two. This engagement was to be merely a temporary affair, which she would bring to a conclusion just as soon as Sylvia's attention should be diverted by it from this sad about her father; which would doubtless be as soon as Murray Van Vorst was safely out of the way in those foreign climes which she had discovered he purposed visiting.

The unusual sound arrested her attention and awoke her alarm, and she at once directed her steps toward that chamber from which she had been rigidly excluded during her father's illness. She paused an instant on the threshold, with the door-knob in her hand, a little fearful what entrance into the room might reveal to her; then she turned the handle unceremoniously, and passed in.

Her first glance discovered Sylvia fallen by the bedside; her ears were oppressed by the peculiar stillness of the apartment, and her mind at once leaped to a partially correct conclusion as to what had happened. She suspected that her father had died, and that the shock of his death had prostrated the girl. She moved rapidly forward, and, before she had advanced many steps, confirmed by a single look her suspicions regarding her father. Her attention was next bestowed upon Sylvia.

She had reached her side, and was about to bend over her with a view to discovering if indeed she had fainted, when the girl raised her head slowly and glanced up to see who the intruder might be. The face of the dead was a parallel in whiteness to hers, but the awful misery that marked her every feature found no counterpart in the serenity which was already settling over the lifeless countenance that lay at rest upon its pillow.

A shiver, quick and sharp, ran through her as she met her mother's glance. Then she rose and stood by the bedside, gazing mutely down upon her grandfather's tranquil face.

Believing her still influenced by their late contention (for she was a woman who could herself preserve resentment through all contingencies), Mrs. Yorke accosted her rather sharply, for she saw now that the girl was in perfect command of her senses.

"What caused this, Sylvia?" she asked, in a tone which, though conventionally hushed, was yet acrid. "When did it happen?"

Sylvia turned very slowly and deliberately from her contemplation of that rigid mask upturned upon the pillow, and, leaning down, unbent the long fingers of the old man's right hand and took from between them four narrow slips of discolored paper. These she held out, so that even the deficient vision of Cynthia Yorke could not fail to recognize them.

"These," she said, in a dull, passionless monotone, applying her mother's question to the final extinction of that filial love and esteem and confidence which she had tried so laboriously to keep alive, and neglecting all reference to so small a matter as the mere passing from

earth of an aged and weary spirit. Then she added, "Ten years ago : do you not remember?"

She raised her eyes suddenly, and opened her white lids full upon her mother. For the first time in her life a sick misery stole into the heart of Cynthia Yorke. This girl, whose eyes so accused, scorned, upbraided, contemned, despised her, was her daughter, and, after all, in her own fashion, and to the limited degree of which her nature was capable, she loved her.

She threw out her hands, with an impulse of appeal and remonstrance ; but Sylvia, if she saw it, did not heed the gesture. She had turned her back upon her mother, and was already leaving the chamber. After the door closed behind her, Cynthia stood for some moments gazing fixedly at it, as if she could project her sight beyond it and follow Sylvia's movements to their conclusion.

For the first time in her life she was beginning to feel that her past conduct had not been guided by a far-seeing wisdom. An incipient regret for what she called, not sin, nor wickedness, but bygone follies, began to assail her. The presence of death awoke within her a hollow, dreary consciousness that there was something for every living soul to confront besides the success or failure of mere worldly ambitions. That look which Sylvia had turned upon her discouraged any hope she might have cherished that her image occupied a niche in her daughter's regard or affection.

Remorse, even of a selfish nature, was not wont to afflict her, however ; nor did she allow herself long to entertain it now. She roused herself presently, with the comforting reflection that she had a staff beside her, potent to carry her through all emergencies. Her hand mechanically wandered to her châtelaine.

After that she went over to the bell and rang it. When the nurse appeared, she informed her of Mr. Yorke's death, and instructed her to attend to all the necessary details pertaining to it.

Then she retired to her own apartments.

CHAPTER VII.

HALF an hour later, Sylvia came out of her room and went downstairs, with slow, mechanical movements, which seemed rather the result of past deliberation than the fulfilment of present intention. She moved as if in a trance, and beneath the veil of black chiffon which obscured her features her face wore an expression of wretched preoccupation and introspection. She was dressed to go out, and on entering the drawing-room she went directly to the bell and rang it. After a little delay the butler appeared.

"I want a cab, Jaynes," she said ; "at once."

The man hesitated. It shocked his ideas of propriety that his young mistress should be going out immediately upon the death of her grandfather. Perhaps she was yet ignorant of the event.

"Yes, miss," he replied, adding, "Did you know, miss, that——"

Sylvia interrupted him sharply, which surprised and distressed him, for she was in general what he called "hexceedingly haffable" to those who served her.

"I know everything," said she. The man, departing at once to do her bidding, had little suspicion how much ground her widely comprehensive statement covered.

While his daughter was restlessly pacing up and down the luxurious drawing-room of her grandfather's house, awaiting the coming of the cab, Murray Van Vorst was sitting before his desk in the comfortable but exceedingly plain and unadorned suite of apartments which he had engaged immediately upon leaving prison. He had grown so accustomed to severity in his surroundings that sumptuousness and superfluity of detail in furnishing oppressed and troubled him. The fittings of the room were adequate and nothing more, significant of good taste and an unconstrained pocket-book, but suggestive also of quiet habits and a shrinking from mere show and self-indulgence.

He had been writing letters, but had apparently finished, for the inkstand was covered, the pen dried, and the blotter pushed back to make room for an ash-tray. He was lounging back in his chair, half turned from the desk, with one arm resting carelessly upon it, and his eyes were fixed indifferently upon that point where they had chanced to fall, which happened to be a strip of gilt cornice-moulding that divided wall from ceiling. It was evident that he was deep in thought, and those vertical lines between his brows were even more pronounced than on the day when he had bidden the kindly warden farewell. Only himself and his Creator knew what he had been through during these weeks since he had received his discharge. When he compared the torture endured under freedom with what he had considered such under imprisonment, he laughed derisively at himself for having thought the latter the extreme of martyrdom.

Why, he had been in a comfortable condition of mind during those ten years! No lash of veiled insult had been applied to him; no thumb-screw of unwilling toleration of his society had caused him to wince and quiver beneath its intolerable pangs; no scourge of patronizing protection from individuals whom he thirsted to kick out of his sight had flayed his pride and patience. Even in the drear midst of the profound solitude of his convict-life he had never experienced such an awful sense of isolation as overwhelmed him here in the throng and multitude with which he freely mingled. Set apart from humanity though he had been for ten endlessly passing years, yet he had never comprehended the meaning of the word ostracism until he had returned, and had been admitted, through the powerful mediation of one determined ally, into semi-association with his fellows.

For the good offices of Charlotte Pendexter (and as her name passed through his mind, he removed the cigar from between his lips, like one who would not profane, even indirectly, a holy shrine) had never secured to him more than this. He had been received on sufferance, as the *protégé* of a woman so highly circumstanced as to be a sort of social dictator, whose decisions as to the merits of an aspirant were apt to be final in the opinion of her world. No man of his old set had

come forward and welcomed him with honest and hearty expressions of gladness at recovering him as a friend; no man among his new acquaintances had offered to put him up at a club, or had invited him to join a party composed exclusively of his own sex.

It had been women who had taken him up, and who would have petted and made much of him, had he permitted it; for women are singularly inconsequent and illogical in matters of honor, and, while they scorn and denounce with bitterest rancor the poor and pitiful wretch who purloins inconsiderable amounts to satisfy some desperate need or to relieve some otherwise hopeless exigency, they (sweet, sympathetic souls!) will condone and extenuate a gigantic crime of the most outrageous and abominable character, so be it its perpetrator is bold and engaging.

Van Vorst was not a man to be content with the support of women and the freely proffered adhesion of that class of emasculated drones which buzzed noisily about him, attracted by the excessive supply of that coveted nectar with which a past generation of busy bees had so inordinately endowed him. Had not the queen-bee herself, that loyal, trusting, beautiful woman who alone had made his resurrection supportable to him, lighted upon his very soul in a manner that made it, notwithstanding all other circumstances, a matter of almost impossible exertion to dislodge her hold, he long since would have retreated from an intolerable position, and would have sought to begin a new life, or, at least, to conclude an old one, in a land where his name did not carry with it a suggestion of crime and felony. During the hours that had intervened between the present moment and that painful and memorable interview which had taken place between himself, his former wife, and Charlotte Pendexter, his mind had dwelt upon it, and now his thoughts were busy considering it.

Good God! could women of such widely opposite types be creatures of the same species? How plainly indicated in the appearance, manner, intonation, ay, in the very bearing, of the two, were their respective temperaments and habits of thought and life! Until that moment he had not beheld Cynthia Yorke for ten years, and he marvelled at the decay of what had once been more than average beauty.

There had been little harmony or peace in their married life. She had fallen desperately in love with him and had married him out of hand, for even in girlhood she had been possessed of ungovernable impulses and an imperious temper. He had been a comparatively poor man at that time; but old Yorke had liked him, and waived his want of means for the sake of that peace which was obtainable only by the indulgence of his daughter's caprices. Besides this, even then, the nimbus of great prospective riches encircled Van Vorst's head. But his acquisition of this wealth depended upon the strength or frailty of an exceedingly prudent and well-preserved old dame, Murray's step-grandmother, to whom a life-use of it had been bequeathed, who had always detested her step-children and their offspring (of whom Murray alone lived to maturity), and who maintained no communication of any sort with him, much less afforded him pecuniary assistance.

Old Mr. Yorke had been, notwithstanding his reputation for penu-

riousness, liberal enough with the young couple. The allowance he made them, in the shape of a salary paid Murray for taking charge of his affairs, would have sufficed to maintain them even luxuriously, had Cynthia been other than she was. Owing to her thriflessness, however, the household was eternally in debt; her extravagance was absolutely ruinous, and her continual demands upon an exchequer that her own extortions kept barren soon robbed her husband of patience and forbearance. Money, money, money! This was the theme of every *tête-à-tête* between them; and the jingle of coin was the accompaniment to which the refrain of "Home, Sweet Home" was forever set in his mind.

How well he remembered that scene which had taken place between his wife and himself when he had gone, hot from the charge his father-in-law had brought against him, to prove if his own suspicions had lighted upon the real culprit! He had not suspected Cynthia without cause. He had been much disturbed for some time concerning the source from which she drew the abundance of ready money with which her depleted purse suddenly appeared to be furnished. To all his questions regarding it she had returned evasive answers. Like an inspiration, while that charge was being preferred against him, the truth had revealed itself to him.

He recalled the shame and shrinking with which he had contemplated the necessity of revealing to her the fact that he had discovered her guilt. The brief journey from his father-in-law's study to his wife's chamber had been to him a *via dolorosa*, set with conflicting emotions; for, though there was little real love in his heart for Cynthia, yet he pitied her for the anguish she must endure when she should stand revealed before her husband a felon and forger. With the conviction of her guilt had also come to him the impulse of self-sacrifice. This woman whom he had married must, at all cost to himself, be shielded from the consequences of her own sin. That had been one of the tacitly implied obligations of his marriage-oath. He had taken upon himself the duty of guarding her honor as well as her person, of protecting her in every possible way from shame and disaster. Judging her in a degree by himself, although familiarity and experience had taught him how short she usually fell of his standards, he believed that he should have much difficulty in persuading her to allow him to assume the burden of her guilt. But, as a sort of fungous growth of sudden affection sprang rapidly into being within his heart, generated by an immense pity for her afflicted womanhood, he grew fiercely resolute in his determination to force her to permit him to become her scapegoat.

He had broken the news of discovery to her in the gentlest, most considerate way. Long years had intervened since he had manifested such tenderness to her. He took her in his arms and held her to his heart, turning his own head aside that her stricken spirit should not be needlessly mortified by the necessity of meeting his glance. Before disclosing his errand he had been at pains to assure her of his love, to dwell upon the fact that nothing short of death itself should be allowed to come between them, that it was a husband's privilege as

well as his duty to interpose his own person as a shield between danger and the woman he had sworn to protect. And then, cautiously, gently, with due regard for that delicate sensibility which long intimacy with her coarser nature had not taught him absolutely to lose faith in, he told her what had happened, revealed to her the wretched truth, assuming her guilt and implying it as he spoke.

And how had she met the revelation? A hard and bitter expression came into his face now, as he dwelt upon the way in which she had conducted herself. She had pushed him from her with angry force; she had denied the accusation with flaming eyes and indignant bearing; she had reviled him with the coarse invective of a fishwife, had flouted his proposals with scorn and contumely, protesting her own innocence, and jeering at those tender offers of protection he had made her in such good faith.

But her resentment and assumption of wounded dignity were overdone. The lady betrayed herself by over-protestation. There was a false ring beneath her wrathful refutation, the ring of a guilty fear and terror, the suppressed but still apparent apprehensiveness of a criminal who suddenly discovers his crime detected. Besides this, Van Vorst was in possession of a fact which, in his sight, was a damning bit of evidence against her; and when her assumed anger and wounded pride had exhausted her vocabulary and powers of speech—which had not been until her own fingers had plucked that spurious growth of false affection from his heart, and had planted there the seeds of a fierce hatred and loathing of so distorted and contemptible a nature as this she manifested—he brought forth the fact and dangled it mercilessly before her eyes.

“And how came these checks in your possession, then?” he asked, with stern brevity.

She was once more bold in denial.

“They were never in my possession,” said she.

“The clerks at the bank will swear that you presented them.”

Alack! she had been unmindful of this contingency. Women, unless trained to the profession, rarely practise gross fraud successfully. Their range of vision is not apt to cover the whole field of action. Like the foolish ostrich, they are prone painstakingly to conceal the immediate head of their offending while leaving the whole body of their past conduct exposed to attack. Neither do they sufficiently consider the necessity of covering up their tracks.

Cynthia turned a ghastly white, and her haughty effrontery deserted her; yet she maintained a stubborn front.

“Then they lie!” she cried, with pale and trembling lips.

And then, for one brief instant, Van Vorst let go of himself. He stood before the woman he had married, and cursed her for the ruin she had brought upon his life. He denounced her as a felon, a false wife, a perjured woman, and cast her out of his further consideration as too contemptible to occupy his thoughts. He meted out to her, as well as words can measure sentiments, the actual value of his opinion of her and of his regard for her.

And she confronted him, raging with passion and yet trembling

with dread, until she had learned what were his purpose and intention. Then, assured that, out of regard for the honor of her sex in general, and because the law had made her his wife, and as there was a little child to suffer from the publication of her mother's disgrace, he would allow the charge against himself to stand, she turned from him with a cynical smile, as of disbelief in his magnanimity ; and he left the room hastily, that he might not yield to an awful impulse that had laid hold of him to strike her as she stood there before him.

A real hero in a novel would never be permitted by its author to acknowledge, even to himself, that he had done anything exceptional or praiseworthy in sacrificing everything that men hold dear to a woman for whom he had no regard but that which a man pays to the symbol of an oath. But Murray Van Vorst was not a real hero. He appreciated at its full value the thing he had done. He had formed a very accurate estimate of the amount it had cost him. It was his only compensation to reflect that he had acted like a gentleman ; but this compensation failed him often. He knew that, built as he was morally, he could not have done differently ; that, if similar necessity should again constrain him, he should meet the new demand as he had met the old. And yet, although he never regretted that he had done what he had, being what he was, there were dark and bitter hours when he wished that he had been born with a less stringent sense of honor, a more unexacting standard of masculine rectitude.

And such an hour was on him now, as he sat, with his house swept and garnished, alone, hopeless, miserable, and despairing, ready to move it on the wheels of a restless and aimless purpose somewhere, anywhere, hither, yonder, in nomadic fashion, like the tent of an Arab ; to rest never long in any one spot, but to bring up where chance, or fate, or destiny might direct. Perhaps, although he did not credit the Almighty with interest in his future, it was to be as God directed—who knew ?

His cigar had gone out, and he had let it follow its own inclination. He was in that mood of supreme indifference in which one allows small matters as well as affairs of moment to shift for themselves. There was a sick sense of revolt against every circumstance of life in his heart. That parting with Charlotte Pendexter had been his final act of renunciation. The deluge was now upon him, and it might swamp him, if so it listed, or drift him to any spot in a universe whose whole surface was alike uncongenial to him. He was caught, just at this moment, in a tide of self-pity and despair.

Oh, if only he might have accepted that generous offer, and so have secured to himself the rare privilege and delight of the companionship of the woman he loved ! A caravan in a desert would have been home to him with her beside him. A tent pitched on a barren plain would have sufficed his requirements, could she but occupy it with him. He had no craving for the society of his kind : imprisonment had killed in him the gregarious instinct. He felt no attachment for any special spot on earth : Disgrace is a hunter that keeps his prey on the move.

But oh for one comprehending and sympathizing comrade, before whom his honor might stand forth in its integrity, in whose sight he

should be what God had made him—a man, not a felon; a martyr, not a criminal! If he might have such a one ever beside him, to cheer, comfort, love, and console him, why, the rest of the world might go hang!—he asked nothing of it.

He sprang to his feet, and, with hands thrust into his pockets, began to pace the length of the room, with long, nervous strides.

Meanwhile Sylvia's cab had stopped before his door.

Bidding the driver await her return, the girl alighted and entered the narrow hall-way, where she found the janitor of the building reading a newspaper.

"I wish to go to Mr. Van Vorst's apartment," she said to him. "Do you know if he is at home?"

The man replied in the affirmative. Sylvia entered the elevator, and in another moment she stood demanding admission at her father's door.

Her summons was answered by a person who was vaguely familiar to her, but who apparently did not recognize her in the least. She afterwards remembered that years ago he had been employed by her father as a sort of general factotum, a kind of office servant and private errand-boy, whom she had frequently seen at her grandfather's house, to which he was often sent as bearer of communications from her father to her mother or grandfather.

She paid little heed to his identity now, however: her mind was occupied with more urgent matters.

"Can I see Mr. Van Vorst?" she asked, and a certain cadence in her voice revived long-buried associations in the servant's mind, causing him to scan more attentively this exceptional caller.

Sylvia mistook the hesitation occasioned by the man's efforts to establish her connection with bygone events for uncertainty as to his master's wishes regarding visitors.

"I am sure he will see me," she urged, impatiently: "I am his daughter."

"Miss Sylvia!" the man ejaculated; and in an instant the identity of each was revealed to the other.

"Thomas!"

She held out her hand, and he took it deferentially into his.

"Oh, Miss Sylvie, we've got him back again after all these years!" he remarked, with a slight tremble in his voice.

The girl nodded assent to his words.

"Yes," she said; "but where is he, Thomas? I must see him at once."

And, as she lifted her face interrogatively to his, the servant saw how wan it looked, how troubled, pale, and agitated. Immediately, apprehension on his master's behalf was kindled in his mind.

"Miss Sylvie," he asked, anxiously, "it is nothing more come to him?"

She shook her head reassuringly.

"No," she said; "no. Where is he, Thomas? Show me in at once, please."

The man delayed no longer. Preceding her down the hall-way

which led to his master's sitting-room, he threw open the door of the apartment, and announced, in a hushed voice, "Miss Van Vorst to see you, sir," and retired, closing the door again promptly upon father and daughter.

Van Vorst was standing at a distant window, gazing out into the street. He turned in response to Thomas's announcement, wondering who his visitor was, a quick idea flashing through his mind that some distant and distressed relative might have come to apply to him, her rich kinsman, for aid. For, daughter of his as she was, Sylvia was associated in his mind exclusively with the name her mother had chosen to resume at the period of her divorce from him; and, as her thick veil was somewhat of a disguise, he did not immediately recognize her.

A nearer approach, and the lifting of her veil, enlightened him.

"Sylvia!" he cried, and went rapidly forward, taking both her hands in his, with a quick, covetous gesture, that signified how strong was the paternal feeling the plundered father had for this child who had been stolen from him.

The girl shivered a little, as if she were very cold and the eager warmth of his clasp had made her suddenly conscious of it.

"Yes, it is I, papa," she replied, with little animation in her voice or look.

He wondered at this lack of gladness and enthusiasm in her, for he knew how ardently she had shared his desire that her mother's prohibition against their meeting should be removed, and occasional intercourse, at least, be permitted them.

He noticed, too, how unusual was the expression of her face, how spent and weary she looked, and how hollow and exhausted her voice sounded.

"You have had a struggle to make her consent, dear?" he asked, pulling forward the easiest chair the room afforded, and tenderly seating her. She allowed herself to sink into it, but, instead of resting luxuriously in its depths with an air of abandon and repose, as her father had expected she would do, she remained sitting bolt upright, gazing directly before her, with an abstracted look in her eyes.

"No, I could not persuade her," she replied, dully; "she has not consented."

"Then you have come in opposition to her wishes?" he inquired, gravely, for he neither wished nor intended to cultivate a spirit of disobedience in his daughter. He had old-fashioned ideas that a child's best safeguard lies in honoring the commands of its parents.

"Yes," she answered, still looking straight before her; "I have."

Then there fell a pause between them. The pleasure he had anticipated from those ardently coveted but long-denied interviews with this daughter whom throughout all the long, dreary years of his imprisonment and exile he had idealized beyond the possibility of any woman's fulfilment, seemed suddenly, even as he was about to taste it, to suffer a blight. Sylvia's joylessness and preoccupation were like a ghostly visitant at a feast, constraining him with vague dread and nameless apprehension.

Presently, moved to action by the increasing rigidity and pallor of her gentle face, he went to a buffet and filled a glass of wine. This, with some thin biscuits, he brought her upon a small salver.

"My little girl," he said, very softly and compassionately, "you look thoroughly exhausted. Drink this."

The tender concern so manifest in the tone of his offer went to Sylvia's heart. But she could neither eat nor drink, with that terrible lump of misery in her throat. She raised her hand with a beseeching gesture, repelling the proffered refreshment, and glancing suddenly up at him as she did so.

"My grandfather is dead," she contrived to say; adding, with piteous significance, "I know all the truth now."

And then she raised her upturned palms, and dropped her face into them, while her slender, girlish frame shook and strained and shivered beneath the stress of her great grief and shame.

At her words Van Vorst started, so that the little tray nearly fell from his hands. He placed it hastily on a table and went close to Sylvia, his countenance even more shaken and distraught than her own.

"Good God!" he cried; "what is this you say?"

Then, as he realized how fierce had been the blow dealt the child whom he loved with a solicitous affection that would have guarded her even from a harsh and unkindly breath, he stooped and laid his hand, a lean, quivering, but very gentle hand, upon her bowed head.

"Oh, my little Sylvia!" he whispered, softly and huskily; "my poor little child!"

And so they remained awhile, she weeping the first tears she had shed over her new shame and anguish, he standing close beside her, still, astonished, speechless, marvelling beyond measure at this new turn the tragedy of his life was taking.

After some moments, she raised a wretched, tear-stained face, and held up some pieces of paper for him to take. They were accompanied, and partially concealed, by an envelope, that which contained Samuel Yorke's last message to him, and at the first glance he failed to recognize them. Looking closer, he discovered what they were, and his hand shook as he stretched it forth and took them from Sylvia's grasp.

"Where did you get these, dear?" he asked.

"From my grandfather's dead hand," she whispered, being obliged to coerce her lips in order to make their burden intelligible.

"He is really dead—Mr. Yorke?" he proceeded, with exceeding gentleness, for he was fearful of scaring away her partially regained composure.

She nodded assent.

"And he told you, my little Sylvia, what these were?"

Immense as was his joy at the thought that his child's unwavering faith in him had been justified in its own sight by this confirmation of his integrity, yet he was resentful of the old man's conduct, and would willingly have sacrificed his own satisfaction in this unexpected joy to have spared her young heart the agony of realizing her mother's guilt.

She shook her head.

"No; I—remembered—them," she faltered.

"Remembered them?" he echoed, incredulously. "I did not know that you had ever seen them before."

At this the girl rose suddenly from her seat, and a loud cry that was almost a wail burst from her lips. She turned quickly upon her father, and cast her slight young arms about his neck, leaning upon his breast and meeting his eyes nearly upon their own level; for she was tall and straight as a young sapling, and he was somewhat bent and bowed from that habitual stoop in the shoulders occasioned by long carrying of the burden Fate had seen fit to lay upon them.

"Oh, my father, my father," she cried; "was it not I, after all, that sent you into imprisonment?"

He regarded her with amazement that was voiceless in its intensity, with quick suspicion based on a horrible misgiving. Had her mind, that delicately organized structure of a carefully shielded girlhood, yielded to this sudden and extraordinary strain to which it had been exposed? Had her words any sort of meaning?—if so, what could it be?

She noted the perplexity in his eyes, and sought to relieve it.

"Father," she asked, with a sad attempt to steady her voice, "did you not know that I forged those checks?"

"You!"

He held her from him, and gazed at her with great and painful solicitude. It was true, then, that excitement had turned her brain. But, wet and troubled though they were, the blue eyes that returned his look were inspired by reason and sanity. Their glance was steadfast, if wretched.

"Yes, I," she repeated. "That is my writing, every word of it."

His bewilderment remained unabated.

"But you—why, Sylvia, it is impossible! You were a mere child at that time." He spoke soothingly, for, notwithstanding her steadfast eyes, he yet believed her the victim of a suddenly disordered imagination.

"Yes, a child learning to write. This form was set me as a copy." Then, governed to a conclusion by the significance of her tone and look, Van Vorst, of a sudden, comprehended the whole truth.

"Oh, my God, curse her!" he cried, with such awful violence that the girl, leaning upon him, could feel the vibration of his voice ring through his frame. Passionate anger and rage against the false wife and mother, who had employed her prerogatives to ruin both husband and child, knotted the veins in his face and hands into huge, purple ridges. Into his eyes there flashed such a look of bitter hatred, an expression of such venomous desire for revenge, that Sylvia trembled, fearing the consequences of such resentment.

She raised a small hand and laid it impulsively upon his lips.

"Hush, hush!" she pleaded, protestingly; "remember that, for all this, she is my mother!"

"How did she cozen you into doing such devil's work?" he asked, glaring upon her so fiercely that, had she not known his wrath was aimed at another, she might have been moved to fear.

And then she related her little story, briefly, succinctly, rapidly. While she unfolded the treacherous plot, there issued ever and anon from his white, set lips anathemas against her who had made the innocent child the accomplice of her felonious scheme.

When Sylvia concluded, he took her little hands in his, and held her aloof from him, for he wished her wholly to recover herself before answering the question he was about to put to her, and he felt that the heavy, passionate beating of his heart, which he could feel throbbing in his breast like the screw of a mighty propeller, would perhaps constrain her sympathies unduly.

He had sacrificed enough. There is a limit to all things, patience, endurance, self-abnegation, as well as the lesser virtues. The time had come now for this child that had been born to himself and Cynthia Yorke to make choice between them. Opportunity now offered for this choice to be at once decided upon, and he was minded to seize it. Yet, hungrily as he craved her companionship, intensely as he felt his right to her and his need of her, he was unwilling to influence her in her decision. She must come to him freely, voluntarily, wholly of her own accord, or he would not have her at all.

When her face had in a measure regained its composure, and her eyes, those sweet, troubled blue eyes, had grown somewhat more serene, when the little fingers within his grasp lay quieter and less restless, and a tinge of color had crept again into the white cheeks, he addressed her.

“Sylvia,” said he, very solemnly and earnestly, “I had never thought that events could conspire to make it possible for you to render judgment between your father and mother. I had never foreseen a contingency which should reveal the truth to you. I had hoped—I say it in all honesty and sincerity, as God is my witness—that respect for your mother might continue to exist in your breast throughout your life. Fate has ordered otherwise. The scales by which your faithful little heart refused to allow itself to be blinded to my integrity have dropped from your eyes, and allowed you to discover your mother’s true character. Therefore are you competent to choose between her and me. You know what are her claims upon your filial duty; you know mine. You are aware what need she has of you; in that, she has an advantage over me, for I cannot expect that you should be able to fathom mine. But, nevertheless, I ask you now, being informed of the important points in our respective claims upon you, to choose between us,—to decide which you will hereafter cling to, obey, abide with, and honor.” He paused a moment; the tone in which he continued was so full of suppressed entreaty that it was well-nigh irresistible.

“Sylvia, this is the first reward, the only compensation, I have ever asked of Fate for what she has made me endure. If she grants me this, I will forgive her the rest; I will be content to remain under the heavy shadow of disgrace the rest of my life. Shall I go away a little, my child, and give you time, or will you tell me now, which you will make choice of, which you will elect to cling to in future,—her or me, your mother or your father?”

The twilight was fast coming on, and shadows were already hovering about the more obscure corners of the room. A clock on the mantel ticked loudly, and the sound of its ticking seemed to Sylvia like the beating of a monstrous hammer upon her brain, her heart, her nerves, upon all her senses and consciousness. "Which—which? Which—which?" she thought its refrain rang, and she longed to cry out against it, bidding it cease, and not thus hasten and harass her decision.

Which—which? Which—which? Over and over again, the monosyllable was driven in upon her weary brain. She looked at her father. Here were rest, congeniality, harmony, love, and joy. She thought of her mother. There were disturbance, misunderstanding, strife, affection scarce worthy of the name, and trouble. Which—which? Which—which?

In the great crises of life, it is often some unimportant, some irrelevant trifle that points to a conclusion. Such now turned the balance of Sylvia's decision. She had dropped her eyes from their contemplation of her father's face, and they had chanced to fall upon a small white object that lay upon the rug, just where the hem of her gown touched it.

Van Vorst had been taking phenacetine for a nervous headache, and one of the small tablets had escaped from its phial and dropped upon the floor. In an instant that insidious habit to which her mother was addicted recurred to the girl's memory. And the recollection brought with it so strenuous an argument against deserting her mother, that she could not find strength or force within her sufficient to combat it conscientiously.

Abandon her mother to an enemy that constantly menaced her very life! Relinquish her into the hands of a vicious and deadly foe! Retreat from that fight in which she was gallantly striving to defend a feeble soul from the effects of its own weakness! Leave her mother to a fate perhaps worse than death itself, in order to gratify her own desires under cover of solacing her father's solitude! She roused herself, and her blue eyes again grew moist with tears. Gently, but very lovingly, she placed her arms anew about Van Vorst's neck, and drew closely to him.

"My own dear father!" said she, in the tenderest tones her voice could assume, "there is no uncertainty in my heart as to which of my parents has fullest claim upon my respect, my reverence, and my love. My faith in you has never even needed corroborating, so strong has it always been; but my reverence for you has increased so greatly that I feel scarcely worthy to call myself your daughter. I had not thought there lived a man capable of such self-abnegation as you have shown. Feeling thus, imagine what it is to me to be obliged to refuse the small compensation you ask at my hands, and to refuse it, too, for the sake of one who has allowed such self-sacrifice and has shown herself so unworthy and unappreciative of it. But, father, I must do it. I cannot, I dare not, leave my mother. Let me tell you why."

And then she informed him of that wretched habit which Cynthia had contracted. She told him how, by degrees, it had fastened itself

upon her and made her in a measure its slave. She, Sylvia, alone had power to subdue its tyranny, to coax her mother to withstand its temptation and contend against its noxious spell. She told her tale simply, and yet with great force and moving eloquence. Her mother's danger lay fully exposed to Van Vorst's sight when she concluded. Then, in her turn, she made him arbiter of her future.

"Father," she said tenderly, with wistful regret and sorrow, "I have concluded in my own mind what it is right for me to do; but I leave the final decision with you. What do you think? Can I, ought I, abandon her in her peril, even for your dear sake?"

And again poor Van Vorst was obliged to trample upon his own soul and answer, "No."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the terms of old Samuel Yorke's will were made public, they created considerable comment. In the first place, they were published broadcast in all the principal dailies throughout the country, in accordance with directions given his executors, in a private letter of instructions addressed to them; in the next place, they made the scantest provision for his daughter and only child, Cynthia Yorke, sometime called Cynthia Van Vorst; and in the third place, they appointed his beloved and highly respected friend, lately his son-in-law, Murray Van Vorst, to be sole trustee of the bulk of his large fortune, which was left for the use of his dear granddaughter, Sylvia Van Vorst, and her heirs and assigns forever. To this same beloved and highly respected Murray Van Vorst, lately his son-in law, the old man likewise bequeathed a legacy in the shape of his own watch, the close companion of a lifetime, in token of his unavailing regret and remorse for a miserable and ruinous misconception and error in regard to Van Vorst, into which the testator had been betrayed some ten years previous to the date of the will. For this instrument had been but lately drawn up; indeed, its date corresponded with that upon which Martha Melton had been consigned to jail, a day preceding Van Vorst's liberation by only a week.

It may be imagined how much gossip such a singular will occasioned, and what speculations were rife concerning it. Of course the appointment of a recently discharged felon to such a position of moral responsibility as that of sole trustee (without bonds) of a very considerable property was indicative of but two conclusions: either the old man was mad, and therefore the will could be successfully contested by her who had suffered most from its strange provisions, or old Yorke had discovered proof of the innocence of the man he had prosecuted for gross abuse of his confidence, but was unable to convince the world of his mistake by naming the real offender, and had therefore taken this means of protesting his belief in his son-in-law's honor.

It was expected by the community at large that the hardly entreated daughter would break the will; and the sympathies of people generally, even of such as had no great liking for her (which meant most

of those who were personally acquainted with her), were much stirred in her behalf. But the will was probated without opposition; the few legacies it contained were duly paid, and the executors made preparations to turn the trust over to him to whom it had been devised; apparently the testament was to be allowed to stand as it had been framed. Then people began to wonder and speculate in earnest.

Murray Van Vorst, still drifting with the tide, had been caught in this new current, which withheld him from carrying out his peregrinatory intentions. One day he met an old friend upon the street. This gentleman, instead of passing him with that mere nod of recognition to which he was growing accustomed as the usual salutation of those whose acquaintance he really valued, accosted and joined him.

"I say, Murray," he said, after a few casual remarks had been exchanged between them, "why don't you join a club?"

Van Vorst had repressed a thrill at the sound of his Christian name; it was long since he had been thus addressed by his associates. He also crowded down all signs of exultation over the proposition couched in Trowbridge's question, although he well comprehended of what vast potentialities of recovered social standing it was significant. He knocked an orange-peel off the sidewalk with his cane before replying.

"Which?" he then asked, carelessly.

He was putting his pretensions to a very considerable test. No one knew better than he the grade of the various clubs in New York. He wished to discover to what degree in the scale his friend considered him justified in pretending. It would signify to him how influential had been old Yorke's implied acknowledgment of his probity.

For an instant Trowbridge hesitated. Then he made answer briefly but directly, naming two of the most select among the many clubs of the city. Van Vorst's face flushed. He could not control that tacit admission of his gratification. Otherwise his pride constrained him.

"H'm! Well," he returned, reflectively, "I don't think I will—yet: would you?"

The situation might have been an awkward one for a man less frank and impulsive than Morton Trowbridge. He met it squarely, however, and so avoided its embarrassment.

"Yes, I would," he replied. "You don't know how far old Yorke's will has gone toward reinstating you, my dear fellow. We've always liked you, Murray, but, confound it! what were we to do when you allowed yourself to be sent to jail, don't you know?"

Van Vorst nodded.

"Quite so," he responded. "I don't blame any of you; I never did. I couldn't expect any man to care about reckoning a jailbird among his acquaintances. I should fight shy of creatures of striped plumage myself."

His former friend regarded him narrowly. He was really very much interested in him, and would have been glad to be the means of restoring him to the good fellowship of his own set.

"But, Murray," he said, "why don't you just admit your innocence? You needn't mention the real offender; that is not at all

necessary. Just confirm what your father-in-law has implied, by your own word of honor, and every one will be satisfied."

Van Vorst at that moment lifted his hat to Charlotte Pendexter, who was passing in her victoria. Satan was emphasizing his temptations. The honor of his fellow-men, in whose regard it is the ambition of every right-minded man to stand well, and the love of woman, which, in this particular instance, he craved beyond measure, were being united into a subtle and powerful attempt upon his strength of resistance. He knit his brow. Then, "*Retro, Satanas!*" he muttered, half audibly; and aloud, "Would they? Not every one, I think," he said. "I know of one man who would not. No,—thanks, old man," he continued, warmly, "but the time for my reinstatement is not ripe yet; I don't know that it ever will be. Certainly it won't if it depends upon my asseverations to bring it about. I am what I have always been. Circumstances have worked against me; circumstances may work for me. If they do, I admit I shall be glad. If they do not—why, I have been about as low in my mind concerning myself as I am ever likely to be, and so, I presume, I shall be able to pull through, somehow."

Since that scene beside her grandfather's death-bed, no words had ever passed between Sylvia and her mother concerning the girl's discovery. It was impossible for her to broach the subject, and no good could result from so doing. The matter was too involved for her analysis; she could hardly desire that her father's rehabilitation should be purchased by the disclosure of her mother's criminality.

It was a dark hour for Sylvia,—quite the darkest and dreariest through which her young life had ever watched. Between herself and her mother there rose a partition bristling with thorns,—a very cactus-hedge of separation. Lennox was still forbidden the house, and she had no mind to ask favors of her mother, feeling as she did toward her. Charlotte she dared not visit, fearing lest the sweet sympathy of her friend should cause her to betray that horrible secret upon the preservation of which her mother's fair fame depended. Even had she known that Charlotte was aware of the truth, natural reserve and filial consideration would have withheld her from discussing her mother, even with her nearest friend.

Therefore she remained close within the house, occupying herself with the duty she had undertaken, but which became daily more difficult of fulfilment; for Cynthia had been sorely harassed by her father's will, and sought relief from the exposure with which she felt it menaced her in that seductive charm which was one of the most dangerous attributes of her deadly enemy. She was continually apprehensive lest conjecture, set afloat by the fact that old Yorke had chosen to pay her divorced husband the highest tribute of respect at his command, should light upon her as the one person whom both these men felt it necessary to shield. A guilty conscience breeds a fearful spirit, and even in the respectful glances of her servants Cynthia began to imagine she detected suspicion and surmise.

Under such circumstances it was not strange that the nervous creature had constant recourse to morphine. Beneath its influence she

gained a certain ability to meet the exigencies of her wretched situation, or at least to regard them with comparative indifference. She would have been glad for Sylvia to go out more. The girl's presence annoyed and coerced her. It carried accusation with it, besides being a curb upon her inclination. Her maid, a Frenchwoman of calibre much resembling her own, was amply sufficient for her requirements, both in the matter of assistance and companionship. Mrs. Yorke was the sort of woman who has no scruples about gossiping with her servants ; she quite enjoyed their conversation, and liberally encouraged it.

Sylvia's society made her nervous, and she avoided intercourse with her as much as possible ; Suzanne's tranquillized and entertained her ; besides which the wily Frenchwoman encouraged the injurious propensity, indulgence in which made her mistress a more endurable person to live with than she would otherwise have been.

The only occasion upon which Sylvia made the slightest allusion to the miserable facts she had discovered in the hour of her grandfather's death, occurred one day about a week after the old man was laid at rest. She had been forced into this necessity by a sense of justice, as well as by affectionate solicitude for one who had served her and hers long and faithfully,—one who was now languishing in jail, an innocent victim of that fearful unscrupulosity which had driven Cynthia to sacrifice to her miserable and paltry ambition those who had the strongest claims upon her consideration.

Awakened to the knowledge that her mother was capable of great crimes, Sylvia had immediately concluded her to be the perpetrator of that meaner and more paltry one the onus of which had been cast upon the honest shoulders of her seamstress. To release Martha from unjust imprisonment had long been one of the strongest desires of the girl's heart ; now, being the daughter of Cynthia Yorke, she felt her honor engaged to accomplish that release. Intercourse, of any nature, with her mother had grown exceedingly painful to her. The positions of parent and child had become reversed, and nothing is more constraining than an abnormal relationship. The daughter had become the judge and superior, the mother the culprit and subordinate. What conversation took place between them had to be carefully chosen from a range of topics exceedingly limited, that none should bear upon a subject whose consideration embarrassed both in nearly equal measure.

She had been obliged to reinforce her courage by constant reflection upon the outrageous injury done the faithful old woman by the mother, whom even now it was her impulse to spare as much as possible, in order to bring it to the point of broaching the matter to Mrs. Yorke. Finally, however, one morning, she mastered her reluctance and invaded her mother's chamber, determined not to leave it until she had secured the means of Martha's release.

Cynthia was lying on a sofa, with a novel in her hand. The windows were carefully shaded, but even in the subdued light it was apparent that morphine and apprehension together had worked great havoc in her looks. All the devices of a profession in which her tiring-woman excelled were powerless to hide the sad ravages a few

days had made upon her person. There was a terrible struggle of conflicting emotions going on in Sylvia's breast as she stood beside the lounge and gazed down upon that mother who, for all her despicable crimes, was yet a being to whom she had grown attached with a certain perfunctory affection, which, if not the highest type of filial love, was yet in a manner sacred and tenacious of its object.

A vast pity for that moral weakness and distortion which could have contemplated and committed such perfidy, a profound yearning to discover in her mother some sign of repentance and remorse grounded on a more worthy motive than that of self-consideration, an involuntary shrinking from one capable of such evil as Cynthia had wrought, a longing to win her to acknowledge her faults and ask forgiveness of those whom they had most potently afflicted, aversion, commiseration, repulsion, solicitude,—all these emotions, dominated by the necessity of compelling her mother to perform an action which would be most distasteful to her, warred together within Sylvia's being.

She greeted her mother, who replied fretfully, with her face turned aside: she never had voluntarily met her daughter's eyes since that moment when Sylvia's accusing glance had revealed her knowledge of the truth. Then, without circumlocution, the girl went at once to the point.

"Mother," she said, bluntly, "I have come to say to you that Martha must be released from prison at once."

A dark flush put to shame the rouge on Mrs. Yorke's face.

"What have I to do with it?" she asked, sullenly, still with her eyes turned aside.

"Everything."

There was no combating the menace suggested by that trisyllable. Cynthia had some time since confessed herself a captive. What use was there in a mere rattling of her chains! The action gained her nothing. Submission was her easiest course.

"What shall I do?" Her tone was still sulky and fretful. She had really, through the effects of morphine and a weak collapse of spirit, become indifferent to all things but peace. If they would merely let her alone, she cared not what they did. Her energies, vain and obstinate, but never very powerful, had been completely sapped by the insidious drug.

Sylvia's answer was ready. She had studied her subject carefully for many days.

"You will sign a deposition which I have drawn up, that the money never was stolen; that it was mislaid, was not taken from the drawer at all; that it has been recently discovered in another place. It is not the actual truth, but—"

She paused. She was still outwardly respectful and considerate of their relationship, therefore she would not add the words that came to her lips, "you will not mind that."

Her mother made a little impatient movement with her hands.

"Well, well," she said, "give me the paper and a pen. Shall I have any further bother about it? I am tired out, Sylvia, and can't go through any more worry and trouble."

And then she began to cry weakly, and the girl thought her mood was perhaps of a penitent nature, and was prompted to take advantage of it, being of all things in the world most desirous of saving from utter wretchedness and despair this pitiful and treacherous soul whom she hoped yet to reform. She fell upon her knees beside the couch, cast her strong young arms about the slight and wasted form, and on the bosom which had scarcely ever beaten with a generous and unselfish impulse she laid her pretty head, sadly wearied and troubled with the cares and sorrows that had crowded into the past fortnight, looking into that mean and whimpering countenance, which was even now tear-stained solely upon its own account, with tender, yearning eyes which sought to discover some token of a contrite spirit in the familiar lineaments.

"Mamma, oh, mamma!" she cried, "no wonder you are tired and worried! Dear, if you could know how my heart aches for you, how gladly I would spare you all this awful suffering, if I only might! There is yet a possibility of gaining peace through a partial atonement. Oh, mamma! if you would only seize it. My father——"

But at this Cynthia had pushed her away.

"That will do!" she burst forth. "I am in no condition for a scene. Give me your paper and a pen. I will sign it, since I must. Then you may ring for Suzanne. She is the only being in the world who has any consideration for me." And she again fell to crying feebly, the shallows of her nature much stirred by *pitié de soi-même*.

About a week after this, Van Vorst presented himself at Mrs. Yorke's door. He had sent her a note informing her that it was necessary he should see her, in order to discuss certain matters relating to the trusteeship, which he had determined to accept, believing it for his daughter's interest that he should do so. He was also quite willing to accept the slight reparation which old Samuel Yorke had been willing to make him.

There was a brougham standing before the steps, and the liveries of its servants he recognized as belonging to Mrs. Pendexter. As he was shown into the drawing-room, he discovered Charlotte conversing with Sylvia. Both women rose as he entered, and the girl came forward, welcoming him with a warm embrace.

"Oh, papa!" she cried, a pretty flush of pleasure rising upon a face that was nowadays rarely tinged with color, "it is good to see you here!"

And, with her left hand still clasping his, she led him forward to greet Charlotte. As the man and the woman shook hands, the girl stood between them, with her right arm thrown lovingly about her friend's waist. There was a significance in the grouping which was felt by Charlotte and Van Vorst, but which, because she was ignorant of that great desire for union that lay in the hearts of these two whom she so dearly loved, escaped Sylvia. Nevertheless, she felt the harmony of their mutual attitude, for she gave a gentle little laugh as they stood so grouped, and said, "Oh, I have not felt so happy for a long time," pressing affectionately the hand she held.

Then she let go her hold of both, and stooped to pick up a bunch

of violets that had dropped from Charlotte's bosom when she rose to welcome Van Vorst. As she drew herself again erect, something, perhaps the fact that the two had not, according to convention, released each other's clasp, but still stood with hand grasping hand, perhaps merely an impulse to see if they shared her pleasure in the reunion,—some vague and fleeting thought,—prompted her to flash a sudden, swift glance from one face to the other.

And then a clutch seemed to grip her soul, and she drew in her breath with a sharp "Oh!" as of quick comprehension. Obtuse indeed would have been the intelligence that could not construe the meaning in those faces. The joy of meeting could not but escape from the eyes of both.

Sylvia drew aside. Jealousy, even of this her nearest friend, was gnawing at her heart. Charlotte threw a look at Van Vorst. Better than the man, the woman comprehended what a blow had been dealt Sylvia. She withdrew her hand from his, and moved over to where the girl stood. Then she put out her arms, and drew her into them.

"Sylvia," she said, kissing the averted brow, "forgive me, dear. How could I know him and not love him? Pity me, too, for he will not let me be his wife."

At this the girl's heart melted. Perhaps—for she was only human, despite her loveliness of character and charity of thought—it was some solace to her to know that she bore, and would continue to bear, the nearer relationship to him they both loved. She returned Charlotte's kiss, and then dismissed the subject. She was not yet prepared to contemplate it unmoved.

"I will go and see if mamma will see you," she said, quietly, addressing her father. "Don't go, Charlotte: we will talk together a little when I come back."

When she had gone, Mrs. Pendexter again held out her hand to Van Vorst.

"Oh, I have heard the good news of the will," she said. "I have read its terms over and over again, with tears in my eyes; and, Murray, I am glad! Oh, my beloved, I am glad!"

Even as she spoke, bright, tender drops of joy hung on her beautiful lashes.

Van Vorst raised the hand she would have given him to be his forever, to his lips.

"Dear, I know it," he replied.

"Will you not have me, even now, Murray?" she pleaded.

He shook his head.

"No; not yet," he returned, resolutely, but softening the denial with a glance of passionate appreciation.

She sighed deeply, and the tears fell from the net-work which had held them, and rolled slowly down her cheeks.

"Not yet!" repeated she. "You speak as if some time——" She broke off, and then went on, in a tone almost of chiding, "Your pride is too great, Murray. Men speak well of you now. There would be no shame to-day in being your wife. Already people surmise; they suspect, and their suspicions exonerate you. When will you yield,

Murray? You imply that there will come a time. When shall it be?—when? My beloved, I am impatient of delay."

He drew her to him and kissed her brow tenderly, lingeringly.

"I do not know," he said. "I cannot speak with certainty. I only feel that some day, perhaps not far distant, you will be my wife, and I your husband."

Then he released her, for they heard Sylvia returning with swift step, so swift that it seemed to bode some stress or urgency. They turned quickly, and met her glance as she came, almost running, up the long room toward them.

Her face was like death, white with an awful pallor; her breath came in gasps, and her whole frame was a-tremble with powerful emotion. As she neared them, with one impulse they started forward to meet her.

"What—what is it, Sylvia?" Charlotte asked, in an awed whisper; for there was in the white face that which challenged alarm.

The girl made an effort to speak,—a vain attempt. Once again she strove fruitlessly. Her mouth was parched and dry; her tongue was paralyzed. Her blue eyes made an appeal to them that they should comprehend her tidings by their means only. Charlotte threw her arms about her, and at the human touch the girl's forces seemed restored.

"Mamma—oh, mamma is dead!" she cried. "Suzanne has made an awful mistake in her medicine. Send for a doctor—oh, go!" she besought, turning to Van Vorst. Then a great wail rose from her heart. "It is too late! too late!" she moaned. "It is death!—they all say so. Oh, my mother! my mother!" And she fell forward, inert and helpless, into the arms that held her; and, together, Charlotte Pendexter and Murray Van Vorst carried her to a couch and laid her upon it.

One moment they paused above her prostrate form before seeking to restore her, and gazed into each other's eyes. One glance asked a question; the other answered it.

"Will you be a mother to her such as she has never known?" asked the man's.

And the woman's vowed, "I will, I will. Trust me. She shall be as my own child: I swear it."

THE END.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF "FIATISM."

THE dangerous class in this country does not consist of criminals ; the police can keep them within bounds. Nor is it the illiterates ; they are not a very large class, and they are comparatively tractable. Nor is it the foreign element, for by far the greater part of the foreign element is thoroughly industrious and law-abiding.

The dangerous class consists of persons who do not know enough to know how ignorant they are of those things which concern the body politic. The man who distrusts banks and keeps his money hidden in his attic or buried in his cellar is generally severely punished by the loss of his money for a kind of ignorance that made him dangerous only to himself. But when he is multiplied a million times and seeks to apply his ignorance and his fears to the affairs of the nation he becomes a dangerous class.

The man who thinks that doctors make the well sick and keep the sick so in order to make money out of them is dangerous to his own family and occasionally comes within the reach of the criminal law, but the man who thinks all financiers are trying to rob the country, and proposes not only to get along without them, but to get rid of all their knowledge, is a specimen of a class very dangerous to the nation, for he and his associates can easily destroy more property by a single law than an invading army could by fire. The man who has misread the history of his country, who understands as little of the events going on about him as the Chinese do of an eclipse, and who cares nothing for the teachings of experience, is as dangerous as the man who thinks the gun in his hand is not loaded. Yet both may be well educated, skilful with tools, industrious, capable of buying cheap and selling dear, and so of becoming successful men.

The really dangerous class, the class that manufactures its own opinions without knowledge of facts or habits of thought, the class that is always ready to laugh at all human experience and try any experiment that occurs to minds unhampered by facts and the capacity to appreciate their significance, is almost purely American, and is far from being illiterate. It is large enough to be dangerous only where the foreign element of the population is small, and it is almost universally blessed with a common school education, and often with much more than that. Its average intelligence, measured on the scale of the "three R's," is high.

There were never two propositions more opposed to all reason and experience than that the reduction of the money unit would be a blessing, and that the relative value of two commodities can be regulated by law. The former was probably never widely entertained except in this enlightened day and this enlightened country. Popular protests against cheap money have been recorded from time to time for more than two thousand years. The latter proposition was believed for a long time, but by experience men gradually learned better and

gave up attempting the impossible. After the demonstration of its impossibility had been made complete, it was passionately affirmed in a country of higher school-book intelligence than any other in the world.

The men who entertain these two ideas, the one contrary to all experience and the other so contrary to reason that it never found advocates till very lately except among rulers who sought to enrich themselves at the expense of their people, are able to read and write: some of them are college graduates: they are almost entirely of American ancestry; they are largely of New England parentage, or else they are in the South, whither few foreigners go. In the State where the *Atlanta Constitution* is published, not two per cent. of the population are of foreign parentage; in Mississippi and South Carolina also not two per cent. of the people are of foreign parentage, and in North Carolina not one per cent. In the southern half of New England and in New York the percentage of foreign parentage is fifty or more; in New Jersey it is nearly as much; but in Pennsylvania and New Hampshire, each of which sends an advocate of free silver coinage or so-called bimetallism to the Senate, the fraction of foreign parentage falls to a little more and a little less, respectively, than one-third. Of all the Northwestern States the one most reliably for a sound currency is Minnesota. Except North Dakota, this State has a larger foreign element than any other in the Union. More than three-fourths of the people of Minnesota are of foreign parentage, and more than one-third were themselves born abroad. A good second to Minnesota is Wisconsin, very nearly three-fourths of whose population are of foreign parentage.

The most prolific source of political ideas that do not rest on sound reason and that violate all experience is Kansas. This State boasts, and probably with accuracy, that it has a larger New England population than any other in the West; it was settled in great part by citizens of Massachusetts. It claims more and better schools than any other State, but the political value of schooling is shown by the number of Populists and cheap money men in the State and sent by it to Congress. Only a little more than one-fourth of the people of Kansas are of foreign parentage, and only one-tenth of them are foreign-born. In Nebraska much less than half the population are of foreign parentage, and less than one-fifth are foreign-born.

A class, large enough to be a power in politics, that thinks it would be a good thing to reduce the value of the money unit one-half, and imagines that an act of Congress can fix values, is more dangerous to the property of the country than a hostile army, which can destroy only what is tangible and already in existence. Yet there are facts which help to explain this madness, if they do not account for it. The belief in "fiat" money, whether in the form of greenbackism or of silverism, has its natural history.

No people are so little intimidated by the forces of nature or the facts of history as those who have a New England ancestry and careers of their own making. Men who have conquered nature are not likely to fear anything. The stubbornness of facts does not deeply impress

men who have overcome the stubbornness of earth and air and water,—who have laid the forest low, and made a highway over the river, and tilled the granite rocks. Men who can catch the trout stream that has played for ages, force it into the fetters of a penstock, blind it to the sunlight in which it used to dance, and make it, like Samson, turn a mill in utter darkness; men who can raise tall edifices where nature raised only blackberry-bushes; men who can get one hundred and sixty acres of land for nothing and sell it in town lots for a million dollars,—such men do not think it is a difficult thing to invent a new religion, to set up a new political fabric, to create a new standard of value, or to do business without any standard. To men who have met and conquered physical nature, the regulation of such an unsubstantial thing as human nature seems only child's play. The teachings of history have no meanings for them, because some of them never heard of the teachings, and others reflect that, as they are not Greeks or Romans, English, French, or Germans, inhabitants of an old country or of a small country, or subjects of a king, the experiences of these obsolete and foreign peoples teach no lessons that they need to learn.

They have no regard for the experiences of their own ancestors even, for they have done many things that their ancestors never thought of, and each generation knows much more than the generation before it, and they see no reason why they should not succeed where their grandfathers failed disastrously.

Their education has intensified this noble self-confidence. Most of them are graduates of the common schools, where all that they learned out of books was reading, writing, and arithmetic, and not too much of them, but where they learned from the school committeeman, the village pastor, the editor of the country newspaper, and the member of Congress that reading, writing, and arithmetic are a bunch of keys sufficient to open all the doors to success. They learned from the school committeeman that a farm of five hundred acres, with as good stock as could be found in that part of the State, might be secured without a knowledge of spelling; from the minister, that poetry was rubbish scribbled by useless persons who supposed that potatoes were picked off trees, and reading fiction was a waste of time; and the Congressman had told them that we were the smartest people in the world, that history couldn't teach us anything, because we were different from other people, and our country was bigger than other countries, and we made our laws instead of having them made for us: if we could elect members of Congress instead of members of Parliament, and have a President instead of a king, why could we not do what we liked with mere notions like weight and value, make streams run up-hill, and fine the sun in case of a drought? The Congressman had related to the scholars instances in which he had completely floored another Congressman who was hampered by a college education, and showed how unpractical "book-larnin'" made a man, and how it unfitted him for a struggle after a million dollars or the Presidency.

Downtrodden immigrants from Europe, with a dread of fire inherited from centuries of ancestors whose fingers had been burned, are less bold. The tradition that water will not run up-hill has been transmitted

from generation to generation of European subjects until you cannot eradicate it. They do not understand that everybody knows more than anybody, and have a slavish disposition to follow leaders who they believe know more than they do. Experiments that their ancestors tried and failed in for centuries they are too cowed, too inert, to try again.

But if pioneers are unembarrassed by stores of book-learning, if they confront the problems before them unprejudiced by the knowledge of unnumbered failures, they are not without plenty of ideas. They have no doubt that these ideas are original, because they do not know that substantially the same ideas have blossomed and borne fruit, which proved to be the apples of Sodom instead of the apples of the Hesperides, about every forty or fifty years since the earliest period of which written records remain. Nothing hinders a man from soaring among the clouds so much as his body, and men who have no mass of facts to hamper their mind and overload the wings of their imagination think many of the most striking, beautiful, and elevating thoughts that were ever thought. This capacity for high thinking often coexists with plain living. It is one of the most curious and beautiful provisions of nature that high thinking is often the cause of plain living.

The pioneer stage in the South is long past, and the experience with Confederate currency ought to have made a propaganda of cheap money impossible till the last survivor of the civil war was dead. Yet in no other part of the country is there so general a failure to reason correctly and consecutively about money. One of the ablest papers in the South put forth last year the proposition that, as all values were measured by dollars, to divide the unit in two would be to double the value of all property. If the educated, successful American editor who propounded this were told that, as distances are measured by miles, all distances would be doubled by reducing the unit one-half, he would have noticed the fallacy of the reasoning instantly. The intellectual machinery is very uncertain in its workings, and, like a ship's compass, must be "swung" frequently or it will lead the man who follows it far astray.

In the South the agricultural element is greater in proportion to the commercial element than it is in the Northern and Eastern States. It has also the prestige that it acquired before the war, when it was dominated by the wealthy planters. The farmer has been greatly flattered, by the poets from Virgil down, and by the politicians in our own day to an extent that can hardly fail to have turned his head. Owing to their numbers, what the farmers think about a public question is of vital importance to the politician. But the farmer receives no knowledge by revelation, and rarely makes an effort to acquire information beyond his own pursuit by study. The farmer is seldom familiar with monetary and commercial facts beyond the discomfort of paying his note at the bank, and the comparison of his own small profits with the wealth of financiers in the great cities, and with the considerable fortunes made by dealers in the very articles which he produces at great labor and small returns, inclines him to feel that he is the victim of commercial men or methods. His occupation does not train him to reason closely and to distinguish nicely between words, yet so

many words used in connection with monetary matters have a double signification, one general and one technical, that one is more apt to think wrong here than anywhere else, and this probably is the explanation of the great number of educated men who are entirely at sea when money is under discussion.

The farmer has not only been flattered by the politicians till he is apt to regard his own illogical inferences from an inadequate observation of an insufficient number of facts as far superior to the carefully reached conclusions of historians, economists, and financiers, but he has, as a class, been deteriorating. One of the most remarkable changes of the time is the increase of urban population. This is at the expense of the rural districts. It is, broadly speaking, the brightest and most progressive young men from the country who find their way to the city, and the general average of rural intelligence is lowered thereby. The farmer who stays at home and hears of the prosperity that has been secured by some of his old companions who went to the city, and whose wheat and cotton have been depressed in value by the increased production here or abroad, is quite disposed to feel that he is the victim of something, probably of the commercial classes, whose cities seem to be highly prosperous. In this condition he is a susceptible listener to the demagogue who talks glibly to him about money, a subject of whose history and operations, beyond the selling of his crop and the buying of his supplies, he is wholly uninformed, so that he cannot detect false statements or false logic. Considering the number of professional and business men, not all of whom are in the West and South, whose ideas on monetary matters are extremely hazy, it is not singular that a great many farmers have accepted without question the statements made to them by candidates for office and editors of local newspapers, some of whom are deceptive, while others are only ignorant.

It is hardly necessary to say that the government has for a generation been doing all it could to inculcate unsound ideas of finance in the popular mind and to mystify the popular conceptions of money. How the paper note and the silver dollar are kept at the value of gold a great part of the population does not understand, and no small section of the population could not be made to understand, but the fact is obvious and impressive, and every man invents his own explanation of it. The readiest explanation to a man quite unfamiliar with monetary history is that there is no such thing as intrinsic value, and that whatever the government says is so.

The result of all these conditions is that if a visitor from Mars were to judge the people of the United States by very much of their talk about value and money and credit, loans and currency, including some of the problems that were wrestled with and settled at the dawn of history and possibly by prehistoric man, he would conclude that we were one of the least intelligent nations on earth; that nowhere else was there so wide-spread an incapacity to reason, nowhere else such a contempt for experience, and nowhere else such a hopeless confusion of ignorance with wisdom. But he would judge wrongly, because from insufficient data. It is only in one domain of thought that a great portion of the American public is roaming around in ignorance

and superstition. There are cases of insanity on a certain subject while the mind is clear enough on all other subjects. In these cases it cannot be confidently predicted whether disaster will be escaped or incurred, so much depends upon circumstances. It is so with the nation and the currency question. We have certainly sowed the wind; we may possibly be lucky enough to escape reaping the whirlwind, an awful touch of which we had in 1893. In the mean while, the foreigners are holding back the calamity that Americans are screaming for.

Fred. Perry Powers.

A TIGER-HUNT IN BORNEO.

IN the fall of 1880, while in the service of the Dutch government in its East Indian possessions as a civil engineer, I was ordered to survey and build a fortified military post, a "kraton," as it is called in Malay, on the southwest coast of Borneo, at Pontianak.

A battalion of soldiers had been ordered to the spot, and was quartered in bamboo barracks near the ground which had been selected. I had a bamboo house belonging to the government and called a "passagran," close to the locality of the prospective stockade, and located on the corner of an open space occupying an area of about five or six acres of ground, which the natives had surrounded by a fence and which served them as a market-place once a week,—the "passar baroe," the new market, as the Malays designated it.

A "passar" is no small affair even in Borneo, and every week the very oddest and most interesting assortment of articles of barter was brought to market there.

A weird figure, always surrounded by an awe-stricken crowd, was the "joeko obat," the medicine-man, offering his herbs, roots, and native decoctions for sale with the cunning of a down-East trader and the impressive "I am the great I am" mien of a shaman; yet I often fancied I observed on his solemn face the peculiar twinkle of the eye which the Roman augurs indulged in when meeting on the Via Appia.

Here bows and arrows, pikes (cancigs), shields, and the machete-like klewang swords are exposed for sale, with the curved kris dagger, the point of which is often dipped in some deadly vegetable poison. Beside the weapons of war lie the fruits of the soil,—edibles, gambir, and tobacco. The natives mix the latter with quick-lime, and roll it into a chew or carry it between the gum and the under lip.

The textile art is represented by matting to sleep on and small pieces of cotton cloth very artistically woven and colored; the native women are just as proud when they adorn their heads with these gaudy kerchiefs as our Southern colored sisters are of their bandannas.

Small tin powder-horns imported from China, filled with gunpowder, are sold to the natives, for some possess old-fashioned rifles and are eager to buy the "obat snaphan," the rifle medicine.

Ropes of cactus fibre, dingding or dried meat, ikan-king or dried

fish, and—a most horrible insult to the olfactory nerves—fish-balls made from a decayed small fish, the trassie. The natives adore this latter delicacy, which they eat mixed with rice. Banana roots in vinegar (atjar pisan), green sugar-cane, and small cakes of sugar of native make. Dried sharks' fins, which they boil in rice into a kind of jelly, form another *pièce de résistance*. Cocoanut ladles for oil, water-gourds for drinking-vessels, etc., are offered.

The articles of commerce which are collected by the natives and finally reach the warehouses of exporting firms in the ports are cocoanut oil, gum damar, gummi gutti, and gutta-percha, which are brought to Batavia by Chinamen in their coasting junks. Bamboo and rattan baskets are offered, and the spirit of a sharp bargain is just as lively if not as noisy with these guileless natives of Borneo as it is on 'Change.

The natives of twenty miles' distance would come to the market once a week in their carts (grobaks) drawn by a couple of karbaws (Borneo oxen), bringing their produce for sale or barter. They would arrive the evening before market-day, and, unhitching the oxen, tie them to the wheels of the carts. Swarms of flies always accompanied them, and these pests, which almost covered the bodies of the poor karbaws, did not hesitate to pay me a visit. A Jersey mosquito is a saint compared with these insects. The air is thick with them; a continuous whirr of golden wings resounds; their greenish metallic hues might delight the eye, but they are no respecters of persons, and even a Royal Dutch Civil Engineer, surrounded by soldiers and the implements of his profession, had to admit himself conquered.

The karbaws bellowed, mephitic odors rose to heaven, the winged torturers buzzed, and the only being which endeavored to do good, at least in one way, was the karbaw-bird, who feasted on the vermin and the flies, which gave him ample food, on the backs of the oxen. If wishes could have killed, the native men and beasts would have vanished from the face of Borneo then and there.

Hardly had the sun risen when I hied to the radanario, the native regent or governor, and requested him to abate the nuisance of allowing the cattle on the market-place during the night. My complaints were met politely, but week by week the same torture repeated itself. At last I threatened that I would stop in my work, commanded by my government, report my reasons to the governor of Borneo, and lay the responsibility at the door of the radanario. This worthy remonstrated that he had ordered the natives away several times, but that they would not obey his orders. I insisted, and finally we made a compromise. As his means for abating the nuisance were exhausted, he authorized me to resort to any measures I might devise, aside from actual force or disturbance of the peace. I revolved many a plan in my brain; I used diplomacy, strategy, kindness, and threats; but the untutored savages just salaamed, and were at their old stand as soon as the "passar" day fell due. One stifling, pitch-dark night, when the atmosphere was fairly thick with the stench of the oxen and the peculiar musky smell of the insect pests, patience ceased to be a virtue; despair sent me a saving spark of thought, and I arose from the couch

where I had been almost suffocating. Among my stores were several square cans of petroleum which a New York firm had exported to Java. Each held about five or six gallons. I punched a hole in the bottom of two of the cans, and, carrying one in each hand, I walked from my house through the market camp, between every pair of grobaks or carts. The ground and the sparse grass were absolutely dry, parched by the heat, so that the earth absorbed hardly any of the precious fluid. Having crossed and recrossed the spaces between the carts, I carried the empty cans back to my house, struck a match, and in less than five minutes the entire camp was lighted by an endless chain of flame; flashes of serpentine fire shot hither and thither,—a scene never to be forgotten.

The effect of my pyrotechnic display was thorough. In a space of time so short that it could scarcely be confined to minutes, every karbaw was hitched to its grobak, and suddenly carts, karbaws, and natives had disappeared as if swallowed by the earth. The exodus was complete. I was master of the field, and patted myself on the back. When I told the radanario in the morning of my stratagem and its success, he derived as good a laugh from it as I had indulged in myself.

The superstitious natives would not return to the haunted place, but they all schemed thenceforth to revenge themselves on me, whom they well knew to be the perpetrator or instigator of the creeping fire. I knew sufficiently the native character to be aware that they would meditate treacherous tricks, and with more than ordinary watchfulness was on the alert for some devilry.

But some weeks rolled by, and gradually I became less watchful. I imagined that the natives had become reconciled to the new market-ground meanwhile assigned to them, and my fears of their malice were lulled to sleep. One sultry evening, while resting in a hammock on the porch of my bamboo house, trying to catch a breath of fresh air, I overheard a confab between some natives who drew some of my servants into conversation. "If your master only knew, he would surely kill her. He can do it, while we are helpless. He is strong, and his arm reaches far, he of the fire-snake. Not a night passes that we do not lose a few goats; and she will steal the children from our village. Every night that she-tiger and her cubs come to the river to drink, and every night we are robbed of some domestic animal. Lucky indeed are we if none of our children have vanished yet."

The conversation ran on in this vein. Every one mourned some loss by the terrible female man-eater, whose presence they had verified by the footprints of the monster and three young ones. "If the old one was killed, the cubs could easily be captured alive," was the general opinion.

From the first words which I had caught, I was naturally all attention. I had killed tigers in Java, but thought I knew that they were never found in the vast island of Borneo. I was familiar with the habits of Javanese tigers. I well remembered the peculiar associations of the tigers and peacocks of Java. Where the beautiful cunning striped monster cat roams, the vain but stupid bird of Juno is not far. They do not form a mutual admiration society; their hearts are not

concerned,—only their stomachs. The peacock is extremely fond of the tiger's dung, and the tiger thinks a peacock a toothsome morsel to whet his appetite.

The beautiful birds are clumsy fliers, and therefore roost on the lower branches of trees. As soon as the tiger has scented the bird, he howls under the tree, and frightens the bird into a kind of nervous fit; it tries to fly, falls to the ground, and in the twinkling of an eye is gulped down. The tigers use the same tactics with the splendid plumed Javanese pheasants, which are as large as a peacock.

From the first sentences of the native chat which I had overheard, visions of a tiger-hunt rushed through my brain. There, no more than two or three miles from where I lay, the tiger prowled with her cubs. I strained my ears, listening if I could hear the piercing howl. The blood tingled in my temples, and I fairly itched for the sport. To kill a tiger in Borneo, whence no news of their existence had formerly come to us, to bring away, possibly, the cubs as proof of my adventure, such was the picture which I conjured up; moreover, the prestige I would gain among the natives, and how it would help me in my work. I fell into a fitful slumber, and in my dreams were nothing but tigers. I saw them creeping through the bush and jungle; I fired, I killed; more tigers, a shot, a death. They fairly paved the grass; then the carcasses returned to life; at me the whole quarry rushed; I tried to shoot, my gun's hammer could not be brought down; I pressed the trigger with all my strength; in the most critical moment, when the army of tigers were all ready to spring at me, my rifle went off, not with a loud report, but with a dull thud, and—I awoke on the ground, having fallen from the hammock.

I rose, and made up my mind that before the next morning the tiger had to be shot. I resolved to take into my confidence only one friend, a European officer at the military camp, with whom I would arrange a tiger-hunt all our own. I sent for him; he was as enthusiastic as myself. In the morning I called all my servants together and subjected them to a cross-examination on the conversation which I had overheard the preceding evening. Every one pleaded ignorance of the natives' visit; none had taken part in any conversation, and none knew of a tiger. My friend began to chaff me, accusing me of having dreamed; but finally my earnestness won him over. Knowing the Malay character, I apparently abandoned the subject of my inquiry. Talking singly to the servants, I succeeded in worming some information out of one of them. He brought me to the native who had been the spokesman for the party who had told such interesting stories the previous night. He told us about the spot on the river where the tracks had been observed, and pointed out the most favorable stand where the tiger would pass. The tiger would be sure to follow her usual track, as she had met with no molestation in her depredations. He described a dense bamboo thicket about three miles away. This was near the border of the river, and we would be sure of our game. My friend and I arranged to start out to our ambush at ten o'clock at night. We resolved to leave our ponies about half a mile from our hunting stand and proceed thither on foot. I busied myself during the day

with the preparations for our sport. I made two pairs of climbing-spurs, such as the natives use, from bamboo, nails, and cord; these were to serve us in climbing a small tree, in order to have an outlook over the tall grass when watching for the approach of the animal.

After supper, and just as we were ready to start on our errand, one of my servants earnestly implored me to desist from our plan. He laid stress on the danger of our undertaking; it might cost us our lives. He begged us to stay at home; but I treated the matter lightly, and smilingly showed him my double-barrelled gun, revolver, and hunting-knife. My faithful Radjab, who had been my body-servant for some time, could not be calmed. He warned us that our means of attack and defence might prove insufficient, and became more earnest in the expression of his fear. Then several other servants spoke to Radjab in the Dyak language, with which I was then unacquainted. We profited by the general animated chatter to leave the house, and started eagerly.

The night was balmy and beautiful; the moon shone sufficiently clear to show us the foot-path. We proceeded one behind the other, on account of the narrowness of the path. Roads deserving the name are an unknown quantity in Borneo. A more spirited pair of hunters could nowhere have been found. We laughed and talked of our prospective game. Our minds wandered to our far-away European homes, and to the knights-errant of old who journeyed from castle to castle seeking adventures worthy of their prowess, searching

For the maiden fair enchanting,
Whom the dragon wild and ranting
Held in dire captivity.

We pictured to ourselves the glory which we would gain in the eyes of the natives after having delivered them from their terrible foe. Could deer-stalking in Scotland, riding after the fox in England, hunting the buffalo, even a bear-hunt, compare with the sport in view for us? "Life in the far East Indies is worth living, after all," was our unanimous verdict.

Our animated chat had cheated time, and soon we found ourselves near the spot which the natives had described. We left our horses in charge of two servants who had followed us, and walked to the stand which had been selected. About midnight we found the spot. A more favorable location could not have been chosen for the purpose. Right in front of us the broad river bore its waters to the west, towards the ocean, which was but five miles distant: a bamboo forest stretched along the foot of a mountain to the north: to the east and south were the rocky cliffs through which led the path which had brought us here.

After a brief reconnoissance of the locality, we selected two small trees as our posts of observation. The plateau was covered with a dense growth of a peculiar coarse grass, the alang-alang, about three feet in height. We flattened the grass around the trees. I had already fastened the climbing-spurs to my feet, and was ready to ascend the tree. Standing near my friend, I started to converse with him on some trivial topic, more for the sake of killing time, and perhaps in order to hear the sound of our voices, than for any other purpose. From force

of habit, acquired by experience in all parts of the world where constant vigilance and alertness are a man's only safeguards, I listened intently for any sound. My eyes wandered around. Perfect stillness reigned. My eyes grew more and more accustomed to the half-light, and they became riveted upon the grass near us. The air was so still and unruffled that not a feather could have stirred ; and yet, close to the place where we stood, the grass seemed to move. The light of the moon might have deceived me, I thought, but without a doubt, while the grass on all sides remained motionless, it was agitated at one particular spot, which might have been from ten to twenty feet in length and no more than two feet wide. I gazed there intently, watching closely. My friend was bending down, fixing his climbing-spurs prior to ascending the tree. One moment the grass undulated, a wriggling snake-like movement stirred it, and before I could utter a sound of warning—so spellbound had I become—a naked native bounded up, his klewang aimed at my friend's neck. The intense excitement of closely watching the event, which had occupied fewer seconds than it takes lines to describe it, had strained every nerve in me to the highest pitch. With a bound I sprang to my companion's rescue. The blow which was flashing down upon his neck was, luckily, not as quick as my right hand : the point of the klewang (a knife about two feet in length) caught in my palm, making a wound of which I still carry the scar. My quick instinctive movement changed the direction of the thrust, and saved my friend's life. Quick as a flash I grasped my revolver with my left hand and paid our assassin in exchange for his steel with a pill of precipitated lead. The ball went through his head. He vaulted forward as if for a last spring, and fell dead on the very spot which he had intended for our slaughter,—another "good" savage. Now the grass was again agitated. I could see the same undulating motion, but in a direction away from us. I fired the remaining shots of my revolver after the fleeing companion of the now peaceful native gentleman, but failed to hit. Our Dyak friend had smeared his naked body all over with oil, in order to glide more readily through the grass and with the view of an easier escape in case of a hand-to-hand encounter.

The whole adventure passed in so brief a space of time that when my friend rose to his feet and plied me with questions I could not give him any details on the spur of the moment. I told him, though, that, as far as I could see into matters, our hunting expedition had come to a successful end, although a different one from what we had expected. I had killed the "tiger." There lay our dusky assailant, now peaceful and meditating no more treachery. His companion had preferred flight rather than to assist him, when he heard the report of my pistol.

Now that our nerves relaxed, we began to make plans as to what to do. Probably, if the whole truth were told, we were as scared as the runaway companion of our Dyak friend at our feet, for we could not know what might occur next. We decided to leave our horses and walk home, selecting another route from the one which we had followed before. By daylight we reached my house. The intention of the

Dyaks to murder us seemed plain. The plan was cleverly laid out, from the diplomatic tiger story to fixing the spot for our slaughter. I might just as well say here that no one before or after us ever killed a tiger in Borneo. In fact, the treading down of the grass had saved our lives.

If our assassin friends had been successful, they would have quartered our bodies and carried them home, with our heads, as a token of revenge and victory at the same time. They would have had a genuine Dutch supper. Possibly they had begrimed the tiger such a luxury, as they are fond of human flesh themselves. We made up our minds to say nothing of our adventure, at least for the time, in order to observe the actions of the people.

We never heard a word from the natives about it. No remark was made to the effect that one of them had been killed or was missing. The man could not have been one of my servants or working coolies, as their roll mustered complete. I sent for the horses on the next day: they were found tethered where we left them.

There is no doubt in my mind that the murder was planned as a revenge against me, and that many if not all of the natives knew of the attempt. My own servants were cognizant of the scheme, but would not interfere, being afraid of the punishment which their countrymen would surely inflict upon them if they turned traitors to their kin. What confirms my theory is the fact that my body-servant, Radjab, who had warned me against the undertaking, was shunned by his mates for a long time and treated as an outcast by all the natives, not only in the house, but around the works.

A few days later my friend and I went to the battle-ground; but we found no trace of the struggle or of the "tiger." I doubt not that the Dyaks, advised of the failure of their emissary to secure our bodies, had carried away all that was left of him on this earth. Their disappointment must have been painful indeed. We were not sorry, though, to forego the honor of having our skulls serve as ornaments on their huts, or of having our imported Royal Dutch flesh disappear mysteriously. Where the bodies of the Dyak dead go to is a matter of conjecture. There is an appropriate place, however, for their souls. I never saw a Dyak burial or graveyard. Many of their tribes are cannibals. Borneo is no bonanza for funeral-directors.

The alang-alang grass had straightened, and luxurious nature had restored the ground to its peaceful verdure. My friend pressed my hand warmly, and we returned silently from the spot to which we had made our way on that memorable night laughing and chatting gayly.

Jean Theodore van Gestel.

FAIITH halts, and Love grows chill; yet one voice saith,
"Wait! I alone will fail not: I am Death."

Robert Gilbert Walsh.

THE LIFE OF A MEDICAL STUDENT.

THE arrangement of classes, the customs, even the *esprit de corps* of different bodies of medical students vary so widely in detail that no description can apply with photographic accuracy to any one college without a corresponding misrepresentation of others. Thus any description of student life that is more than local in its scope must resemble a composite photograph in presenting the type of the aggregate rather than the details of the individual.

The physician of ten years' standing, unless his graduation was deferred till comparatively late in life, is still a young man; yet on revisiting his alma mater he will find that as great changes have been made in the curriculum as two generations have brought about in scholastic institutions. Medical colleges have only recently emerged from the stage of the "little red school-house." It was truly said of a certain medical college which has been vacated less than four years that, when the professor of hygiene reached the consideration of the proper construction, ventilation, and lighting of school buildings, he could illustrate every point by the sins of omission of his own lecture-room. Stoves still lingered in some institutions of those days, the gas-jets were infrequent and flickering, there were draughts of cold air and ill-smelling zones of warmth. The cries of the caged animals in the physiological department and the odors of the anatomical rooms vied in distracting the attention of students from the lectures. Yet the students were in the main a hearty, healthy, noisy, high-spirited crowd. With the exception of Wednesday and Saturday half-holidays, they worked from ten to twelve and from two to five or six, with an occasional evening or early morning quiz. They had little laboratory work, but drank in lectures like sponges absorbing water, until they could hold no more. Most of the students attended two courses of instruction, from late in September till March, or, in the colleges of highest rank, a month or two longer. Only the latter had a graded system; in the majority of schools the students emerged at the end of the first session with a hazy but pretty uniform knowledge of all the branches of medicine. During the next winter they listened to the same lectures,—and often to the same funny stories,—and the mist of vague impressions became condensed into more definite information. At the end of the second session came the examination. I say *the*, because it was often the only test of proficiency applied during the entire course. The examination, originally oral, was, at this period, differently conducted by different professors. Some assembled the class for a written review, others summoned two or three students at a time to their offices for oral examination, or even quizzed them while driving to a patient, sometimes dropping them on the street to find their way home at midnight from an unfamiliar quarter of the city. Few candidates failed to graduate, only the most conspicuously deficient or the most glaringly immoral being "plucked." I recall one man

who came up for graduation four or five times before he was finally successful. He explained his failures by saying that after examination he naturally "read up" in preparation for the next one, and that whenever he read a thing he immediately forgot it and could never remember it again.

The foregoing description, though not exaggerated, would leave a very unfair idea of the possibilities of medical education a decade ago, since it presents only one side. Many college buildings were of primitive construction, but they were retained because of lack of funds to erect new ones. The lectures, though repeated from year to year, usually underwent a gradual change in accordance with new discoveries, and, although there was no formal grading of the students, more was expected of the senior than of the junior class, and many teachers introduced special lectures and quizzes for the benefit of advanced students. The faculties were already chafing under the restraints of poverty, were advising longer periods of study than they could well require, and were striving to do away with antiquated precedents. While a student could graduate without much knowledge of medicine or of anything else, most were honorable and thoughtful enough to work diligently without compulsion. Moreover, there is something to be said in favor of the repetitional instruction of the old-fashioned lecture course. It is not edifying to think of a student sitting on a bench and absorbing information that his teacher has acquired through similar absorption, or by reading, or, to a limited extent, by personal observation. Our ideal is naturally a student working in a laboratory or at the bedside and digesting his own knowledge, so to speak, instead of receiving it as an invalid takes peptonized milk and predigested meat at the hands of his nurse. Yet, given a certain amount of facts to be memorized and a limited time for the task, the cramming of the lecture system will accomplish more than modern methods, so far as the two may be fairly compared. However, this must be understood as an apology for the lecture system, not a plea for its restoration.

Ten years ago, the medical colleges were reaching out for a three-year course; now the three-year course is an established fact, and a requirement of four years' study in the near future is even more plainly inevitable than was the course of three sessions a decade ago. Several colleges have already instituted a fourth year of study, and a few positively require it. The last year, however, corresponds very nearly to the post-graduate study in hospitals, which the favored few have long enjoyed. Thus the typical medical course in nearly all colleges comprises (1) a preliminary year with chemistry and physics, biology, embryology and physiology, the rudiments of *materia medica* and *pharmacy*, anatomy, including dissection, and histology; (2) a middle year, in which the preparatory study of the first session is reviewed and elaborated, while the dropping of some purely scientific branches allows time for attendance on clinics and senior lectures in practical medicine and surgery; (3) a senior year, about equally divided between strictly clinical and didactic teaching of the practical branches, with a limited amount of time devoted to laboratory work in pathology, bacteriology, and similar advanced scientific studies.

It will be seen that the freshman has scarcely a taste of medicine and surgery ; he is simply laying a foundation on which the more practical work of the second and third years may rest. If he occasionally attends a clinic, it is more as a recreation than as a matter of serious study. In almost every didactic branch the work is divided into lectures by the full professor and the quizzes of an assistant who follows more or less closely the teachings of the former. Originally, each professor quizzed over his own lectures ; then younger men attached themselves informally to the college, and, partly for the sake of fees, partly to be in line of promotion, partly to learn by teaching, established independent quizzes, which were appreciated in direct proportion as they taught the hobbies of individual professors and anticipated the questions asked at examinations. Not infrequently, when opinions clashed, the students would be frankly told by the quiz-masters that they must give this answer to one professor and that to another in reply to the same question. In course of time the faculties realized that it would not only lighten their own labors, but add to the efficacy of the schools, to make formal appointments of quiz-masters whose services should be free to the students and who should have regular hours assigned to them. Thus the present medical student works from eight or nine o'clock in the morning till six in the evening, except for two hours at noon, and usually one afternoon in the course of the week. Saturday holidays are conspicuous by their absence, and extra quizzes, visits to outside hospitals, and other engagements are often crowded into Sunday.

The freshman is rather apt to have a number of vacant hours during the week ; but, on the other hand, his dissection usually comes in the evening from eight to ten and occupies from a quarter to a third of the course. Ten years ago it was no uncommon thing for dissections to be made in a badly ventilated and utterly unheated room, where frozen water-pipes left no provision for cleanliness. Now almost all colleges have reasonably good dissecting-rooms, with hot and cold water, excellent lighting either by day or night, and proper ventilation. Except to a person of obstinately refined taste, dissection may become one of the most fascinating parts of college work. The human body is marvellously intricate, and, with a very few glaring exceptions, the utter impossibility of improvement on the natural construction is so obvious that the thoughtful student develops a growing admiration and reverence as his work progresses. The qualification which I have made may seem irreverent, but it is not intended to be so, and merely recognizes that there are points where the exquisite protections against disease and injury which prevail elsewhere are absent. (I refer in particular to the veriform appendix, the weak spots in the abdominal wall, where hernia is apt to occur, and the opening of the Fallopian tubes into the peritoneal cavity.)

The nameless horror which a corpse inspires is lessened when we have no knowledge of ties that bind the dead with the living. The mummified and grotesquely mutilated fragments of unidentified humanity found in the dissecting-room have little personality. The individual who shrinks from the presence of a corpse often experiences

merely a pleasurable thrill at seeing a skeleton or a mummy. The idea of horror recedes from the skeleton to the dried or preserved anatomical preparation, then to the half-dissected subject, and then to the fresh "stiff," until finally the human body is thought of simply as material for interesting and valuable study. In the old days, the careless student sometimes finished dissecting a quarter of the body—the usual allotment—in a few hours. In such cases he stripped rather than dissected, and knew about as little at the close of his work as at the beginning. Nowadays the careful student is more careful, and the indifferent one must assume a virtue that he has not. Not only those actually dissecting, but others of the same or advanced classes, and even graduated physicians, often drop in, to study or to visit, and the bright lights and congenial crowd lend almost a social aspect to the room.

Two or three hours of each afternoon are usually spent by the freshman in one of the various laboratories, working with the microscope on one day, with test-tubes, retorts, and beakers on another, again learning something of the pharmacist's art, or investigating the phenomena of the lower forms of life. The freshman passes few final examinations. Some of the less important and more purely scientific portions of his course are completed, but as a junior he reviews anatomy and physiology, chemistry and histology. His laboratory work is more advanced, but of the same general nature. He now attends the clinics at the hospital, and picks up much practical knowledge, though not in a systematic form. He hears lectures on the practical uses of drugs, and, though not absolutely obliged to do so, attends most of the senior lectures, but not the quizzes. Life becomes a little more serious for him, and at the end of the year he is expected to pass off all requirements in physiology, anatomy, and chemistry, as well as a few more minor branches.

The senior averages seven or eight hours of definitely appointed work daily, and the necessary study to become even tolerably proficient will occupy all the rest of the time that can be spared from eating and sleeping. His work, however, assumes quite a different character from that of the first two years. The clinics which were allowed during the first year and advised during the next now become of the highest importance. The seniors take the front seats, where they can best observe the details of medical examinations and surgical operations; they take notes of the cases, and receive considerable personal attention from the teachers. Ten years ago the clinics of nearly every American medical college were held on Wednesdays and Saturdays, one hour being devoted to medical cases, and one or two, according to the length of operations, to surgical cases. Now the clinics come at least three times a week, and much of the instruction in specialties is of clinical form. The seniors are also turned into the wards of a hospital for several hours each week, and, under the supervision of the medical attendants, are allowed to examine patients, to note the treatment, perhaps to assist in bathing, cupping, giving electricity, and in other mechanical methods: in short, they have all the benefit of practice except that of actually prescribing.

At the same time, the didactic lectures and quizzes continue, and, so far as anxiety about the result of examinations is concerned, are even more important than the practical instruction. Not infrequently the senior student has the opportunity to assist at operations outside the hospital, or even to take charge of a charity patient. Under the direction of some young and struggling physician, he sees quite another side of practice from that of the rich and influential professors, who work with trained assistants and with every medical and surgical luxury at hand. He cannot help drawing comparisons, but they are seldom invidious, since he realizes that the practice under difficulties of a poor physician among poorer patients will probably fall to his own lot in the near future. Usually it is the student from out of town who has the best opportunities at such practice. Living in a boarding-house, with few or no social obligations, he is easily obtainable at any hour of the night, and no anxious parent can interpose an objection when he is called upon to assist at an operation in a distant suburb or to spend the night with a tedious case in a squatter's cabin on a river bank, where the population is more than suspected of murderous propensities.

Half or more of the students at a college are usually distributed among various societies, which imitate, in some particulars, the Greek-letter fraternities of literary colleges, but which are usually lacking in the fraternal element of the latter and are chiefly supported for the sake of mutual assistance in study.

The medical student, as compared with the college student, is much more industrious. The former is studying something upon which his success in life directly depends. The latter has not this incentive to work, and may even have become imbued with the notion that too diligent application will spoil his chances in practical life. The faithful college student of average ability reaches a point nearly every day when he may conscientiously feel that he has learned his lessons and that the remainder of the day and evening is his for recreation. The medical student's work, like that of the housewife, is never done. Aside from the practical medical specialties, there are scientific subdivisions of medical work, each of which may tax the energies of a lifetime. The ambitious student would like to know as much about anatomy or chemistry or physiology as does the professor in each of these departments; but he would like, at the same time, to be in active practice, like the professor of medicine or of surgery. Then, too, he soon realizes that these professors often find themselves puzzled over cases for which they need the peculiar skill and wisdom of the specialist. The student may aspire to be a celebrated specialist, but he would still like to be able to recognize a case of measles or heart-disease, about which the oculist and the alienist have forgotten. Therefore the medical student works from ten to thirteen hours a day for six days in the week, and toward examination studies on Sunday, or uses that day for sleep that he may work the harder on Saturday and Monday.

The medical student's favorite method of study is the quiz. He attends the regular college quizzes, he has his society quiz once a week, —the fact that the society is made up of undergraduates does not alter

the fact that some of the best quizzes of the course are given by those whom the students choose from their own number,—and he may even employ a special instructor while preparing for examination. Two or three students often take turns in meeting at one another's rooms for quizzing; two friends meet in the hall or the library, and, having ten minutes to spare, quiz each other haphazard as the questions come into their minds.

The *esprit de corps* of a medical college is usually excellent, and a thoroughly democratic feeling prevails among its members. The typical society man is rarely attracted to the hard work of a medical career, and most of the students have at some time been near enough to poverty to be able to sympathize with the few who are actually suffering hardships in order to obtain a medical education. One will occasionally see a mean act committed by a medical student, but he will find the class, as a whole, kind-hearted, sympathetic, and of good moral tone. The medical student still has the reputation of being rough, tough, and boisterous. As a matter of fact, the modern type has none of these characteristics, and is probably better behaved than the average of any other body of men or boys. There are, however, at almost every medical college one or two hangers-on who are simply idling away their time in various forms of dissipation, but who register and attend a lecture occasionally because a nominal occupation lends an apparent respectability. Such men, however, are soon estimated at their true worth by faculty and students alike, and are tolerated only till some overt act justifies their expulsion. The great majority of medical students are working up to or a little beyond their strength, and a few of every class permanently impair their health. The tired man, like the overworked animal, is not usually unruly. Necessity, however, makes the medical student more or less of a Bohemian. While he is dissecting, he can scarcely be welcomed into polite society; his fingers and clothes become stained in the microscopical and chemical laboratories, and he naturally becomes careless as to personal appearance. His time, too, is so fully occupied and so liable to interruptions that anything like regular attention to social engagements is impossible.

The recreations which make up so much of the life of a college student—using the word college in its restricted sense—do not play as important a part in professional schools. If the latter is part of a genuine university, the student who can sing, play football or baseball, or row is almost always eligible to a position on the glee-club or on one of the teams. Religious organizations and others of university rather than collegiate scope can make no discrimination among departments, and the medical department usually ranks in prestige next to the collegiate. It must be admitted, however, that the professional student enjoys the fun of college life rather as an individual than as one of a body, and that the well-known college amusements are dimly reflected in isolated professional schools. Aside from the fact that the medical student has little leisure, the reasons for this state of things are not far to seek. College students are of nearly the same age and have had practically the same preliminary training. So far as tastes

are concerned, we need recognize only two classes, those who attend college from love of learning and those who are attracted by the indirect pleasures of the life. Between the typical bookworm and the pronounced college bum there are all degrees, but college pride brings every one to the support of college amusements, except the most aggravated examples of the bookworm type. In the medical school the average age is several years higher than for the college, while the diversity of ages is still greater. The collegiate student who is over thirty is a curiosity ; he may make himself one with the younger men, or he may drop out of their life, but he exerts no influence as a man of the middle decade of life. Nearly if not quite half our medical students are over thirty, and the presence of men of fifty excites no comment. However friendly the relations may be between men of diverse ages, the homogeneity of college life is inevitably lacking. Moreover, there are educational differences, which courtesy may and should ignore, but which make themselves felt. The college student may feel that his particular academy or normal school is superior to his classmate's preparatory school, but the entrance examinations have put them on an equal footing. The medical student, on the other hand, may come fresh from college, or he may be only one step removed from illiteracy. Again, college students have not much first-hand knowledge of the world, while a large proportion of medical students have knocked about in business of some kind and may be embittered by failures that have forced them to try a new field of activity. They are apt to be engrossed with serious interests, to be busied with family cares, and in various ways to be incapacitated for forming new intimacies. Thus the attempt to describe the recreations of the medical student would deal largely with small circles of friends and with individuals, and would result in nothing typical of a class.

A. L. Benedict.

HOW TO CONDUCT A LOCAL NEWSPAPER.

I DO not propose to enter into the question of how to procure the materials—the plant—necessary to publish a newspaper. Sometimes excellent presses and type can be bought second-hand, at auction or otherwise. The main point is that they should answer their purpose, and that the office should have all necessary outfit, including job type, the selection of which demands good taste and experience. Any persons who are about establishing a newspaper must have a basis of experimental knowledge of the mechanical features of the enterprise, or they will set out on the road to disaster. Except in very small communities, the presses should be run by steam-power. The *Rochester American* was worked off during the first three months of its existence on a hand-press, at which the editor himself took a pull when the proprietor wanted a rest. After Mr. Mann and his colleague had worked up the paper to the point where people began to feel its absence if it were stolen from their door-steps, the Jerome brothers, Leonard and

Addison, bought into it, and put in steam-power. But, although such beginnings sometimes result in success, it is not therefore proved that one ought now to begin so. Get the best appliances, if you have money or credit; if you have not, do the best you can. Certainly you would not undertake to start a newspaper without *some* money and *some* credit.

Let us suppose a typical town, to be called Millville. It is a place of several thousand inhabitants, has more or less manufacturing industry, and is reaching for still more. It has a good and fertile "back country," as the generality of American towns have, because towns create an agricultural market, and an agricultural market creates good land, by the simple processes of cultivation and manuring. Millville has no newspaper, and therefore needs one. It may not know that it needs one, but it is the business of the newspaper aspirant to convince it that it does. This is the first step.

The newspaper projector should first of all have some acquaintance with the leading townsmen. This implies that he is a resident and intends to continue so. He must have a good reputation for veracity and for paying his debts. There is no better ally in the affairs of life than common honesty,—since the paradox is true that common honesty is apt to be somewhat uncommon. If he waits on the leading storekeepers, manufacturers, innkeepers, and tradesmen, and solicits advertisements in a proper manner, he will be cordially met, and will succeed in four out of every six applications. Such canvassing does not lower him in their estimation, and if it lowers him in his own he is not a fit person to conduct a local newspaper.

He should then take a day or two and drive around among the neighboring towns of the county and enlist the services of correspondents. In every country town there are respectable people—usually young—who are more than willing to furnish local items in exchange for a copy of the newspaper in which they are to be published. Thus the new *Millville Journal* will be supplied with items from these towns at a nominal expense. People in these same towns will naturally subscribe for the paper, because they want to see in print the doings of their neighbors and of people in the adjoining towns. It is the fashion for larger city newspapers, and especially for the comic papers, to poke fun at local editors because they print such items as the following:

"From our Chestnutville Correspondent.—Our esteemed friend Samuel Burwell has just finished painting the new barn he erected last fall to accommodate his increasing stock of hay and cattle. We are glad to witness the prosperity of our friend Burwell.

"Miss Tabitha Younghusband has gone on a visit to her friends the Bullwinkles in Shepaugtown, expecting to remain several weeks. Rumor has it that the fair lady's name is prophetic of her destiny. The writer will hope to report later on the quality of the cake.

"Our popular Boniface, Doddridge Darlington, has entertained three disciples of Izaak Walton since last Thursday. They came up from the city, and have had good luck. Of course all the two-pounders got away, but they will carry back some good fish all the same.

"Uncle Jehu Shultz is recovering from his attack of quinsy sore-

throat. When it comes to quinsy, Dr. Fitts is a hard man to beat. Consultations with high-priced city physicians are not in our popular Galen's lexicon."

The fact that such items appear daily and weekly all over the United States proves that they are wanted, and that a local journal must have them. They tend to increase circulation; increased circulation inevitably induces, and in fact compels, advertising; and these two factors not only create success, but *are* success. No newspaper was ever carried to genuine success which neglected the news of its own town and neighborhood.

The editor of a local paper must always bear in mind that his journal is not and cannot be a substitute for the great city newspapers, which carry not only the world's news to all parts of the country, but also an interesting and often superior literature. Its function is to supply the demand for local information. A farmer may or may not care to know that the Dreibund in Europe is overslaughed by the French and Russian alliance, but he is sure to want to know whether the break in the dam on the other side of the township is going to be repaired during the present season or not. This demand for home news is constant, and the supply is constant. Something is always happening, in the country as well as in the city, in small towns as well as in large ones, and the diligent editor, who gathers up all such news and reports it fairly and as truthfully as possible, will always find readers and subscribers.

As an instance of local policy, even in a large community, the editor of a leading Brooklyn paper said to the writer, "I would rather receive a telegram from Chicago stating that a Brooklyn man while in Chicago had sprained his ankle, than one to the effect that the mayor of that Western city had been assassinated by a band of Nihilists."

Advertisements which are calculated to offend good taste and good morals should be totally excluded from local newspapers. This rule of action cuts off a source of profit, it is true; but, unlike saving at the spigot and wasting at the bung-hole, it reverses the proceeding. You lose a trifle, and you gain enormously. When you have published a clean newspaper for a term of years, you have established a reputation that is worth in money vastly more than the petty sums which you have allowed to pass by because you would not soil your pages with the falsehoods of unclean medical outcasts and of such card-sharps as are at present outside the penitentiary.

But it doesn't follow that all medical advertisements should be excluded. There are numerous compounders of proprietary remedies who contribute largely to the resources of country newspapers. The medicines which they offer are, as a rule, prepared out of good material, according to recognized and useful recipes, and there is no reason why newspapers should not advertise them or why druggists should not sell them. The money paid by the patent medicine owner for printer's ink is supplemented by the money of the local druggist, and thus the newspaper receives a double benefit.

Foreign news ought to have a reasonable amount of mention. A column can with advantage be devoted to such news, and the para-

graphs should be brief, pointed, clear, and incisive. The people of the United States are to a great extent naturally interested in the doings of the European nations. This arises from the fact that our population is so largely indebted to Europe for its increase, and representatives of almost all these nations are to be found in every American town of sufficient size to support a paper.

Whether a newly-born paper should be partisan or neutral is a question which its parents should answer for themselves. Perhaps it is a problem of majorities; perhaps the inhabitants of a given town or county are intolerant of people who do not take sides in politics and who strive to please everybody by not attacking the opinions of anybody. I do not think any person is wise enough to answer such a question on general principles.

But we may go as far as this, that, as a matter of expediency, it is wiser to follow the prevalent opinions of the better classes of the community in which you publish your paper than to attempt to change them or lead them off in other directions. In this advice I am sustained not only by reason and the nature of things, but also by the example of certain great journals which have become famous as exponents of national opinion and in fact have never dictated an opinion of their own. Conspicuous among such illustrations of wisdom is the *London Times*, which is one of the most influential journals on the planet, perhaps the most so, and yet its manner of progression is like that of a ship: it is moved by the wind of popular opinion behind its sails, and, like a ship, it never travels faster than the wind. Human nature is constant in its habits: such a course as we have indicated will always insure popularity, and there is no more useful ally to the newspaper proprietor than the good will of his community.

Local journals cannot avoid making mention of local feuds or transient quarrels, where they result in overt acts; but they would do well to refrain from publishing editorials about such transactions. If Mr. A. and Mr. B. come to blows on the street, the incident must be narrated, or the local paper is wanting in its duty; but it is not the business of the editor to comment upon it, or to justify either party. If he justifies A. he certainly makes an enemy of B., and when the parties become reconciled, as they always do, the editor will find that he has not gained a friend, and has certainly made a foe. Further, he has probably made several enemies among the partisans and adherents of the one whom he criticised; and such hostility does him a harm which is not counteracted by the doubtful amount of benefit received from the other side.

All religious controversies should be avoided. It is not necessary to waste any words on this topic. At the same time, there is almost no limit to the publication of truthful local church news. That so many additions were made to a church membership on a given Sunday, that a new organ has been put in, a new steeple built, a new pastor called,—these, and all such facts, may be properly chronicled. Not to chronicle them would be inexcusable neglect.

Within limits, it is advisable to compliment advertisers and new subscribers in the columns of the paper, but never to publish slurs

upon those who do not advertise or subscribe. Although they do not aid in supporting the journal, it is not a fixed fact that they never will aid; and if they never do, it is still true that this is a free country, and that these people, though they may seem derelict, are yet strictly within their rights.

One element of harmless and even positively useful popularity is the systematic cultivation of local pride. Millville may not be the garden of Eden, or the most desirable business or social centre among the teeming and active communities of the United States, but there is no reason why its inhabitants should not entertain the opinion that it is, and no reason why the *Millville Journal* should not support such an opinion. The outside world may smile if it chooses; and still it is familiar wisdom that "it is an ill bird that fouls its own nest," and that "he will make a poor day's work as a fish-salesman who cries down the freshness of his own mackerel."

Eternal vigilance is the price not only of liberty, but also of a successful newspaper, no matter where located. Impress upon your local correspondents the necessity of sending news at once. Items should never be permitted to grow cold; least of all should they be forestalled by a rival sheet, or suffered to drift into the county from outside journals. If there is a large social gathering, a camp-meeting, a husking-bee, a spelling-match, a wedding, let the items come in without any delay. News is not news unless it be fresh; and you would do better not to publish items at all than to publish them too late, either when they have grown stale or after some other sheet has published them.

The mechanical execution of a local newspaper has much to do with its popularity and success. When you have adopted a certain size of page, and a certain method of distributing its contents,—literary columns here, news columns there, correspondence here, foreign summary there, market reports here, local items there, editorials here, deaths and marriages there,—if your method pleases your readers, stick to it and never change it. Newspaper reading is a matter of habit. The reader involuntarily turns to certain portions of a sheet to find what he is accustomed to find. Let him always find it in its usual place; and let your proof-reading be letter-perfect. Without good proof-reading, not even an advertisement of gold bullion at a penny a pound can satisfy the eye of the reader. Printers' mistakes are fatal; and the compositors who make them, the proof-readers who pass them over, and the editors who permit them to appear unpunished, all alike ought to abandon callings for which they are unfitted, and hire themselves out to shovel dirt on a railroad.

John A. Cockerill.

MAIDENHAIR FERN.

WHEN last we trod these paths, how bare the place!
Since then the pixies have been making lace.

Clinton Scollard.

A HARD ANSWER,

AND HOW IT TURNED AWAY WRATH.

IT was a killing they had against Rod Merrit this time. A year back it was selling wet horses ; and casual rumor from San Saba County hinted that when he used to live up there, there was talk of rustling ; but these earlier charges had not been made to stick.

Ordinarily, Rod was a somewhat desultory though fairly prosperous cattleman ; and in the interims between these unfortunate occurrences he had, for a considerable period, run the most attractive and popular saloon in Southern Texas, and had twice been elected sheriff of his county, endearing himself to a simple-minded people first by a captivating combination of audacity and confiding trustfulness, and later by the entertaining zeal and dashing intrepidity with which he pursued and captured or killed an offender when he once understood that his constituency really wanted it done.

His domestic virtues were conspicuous in a man of his class,—a man of such marked physical beauty and charm, and one whose success with the sex had passed into a proverb. From the time he met Jennie Dyer she had nothing to complain of in him, and lacked for nothing that he could get her. She was better provided, more considered, shielded, and adorned by Rod's love, than the wife of many a ranchman worth his millions.

She had her own little bunch and brand, so she need never come asking like a suppliant for money, as poor Mrs. McPherson had to beg of old Scotty, for all their million-dollar ranch. Her pretty hands were soft and tender, her girlish figure straight and lithe, her face fresh as a child's ; for, however the community at large might declare that domestic help could not be obtained, there had always been inducements enough forthcoming to provide it for Jennie.

Old McPherson might stint his wife, Roberts and Hicks and Lapmann—all of them rich—might let theirs work like servants, might be neglectful of them and untrue to them ; Jennie was served like a lady, and Rod as faithful as a man of better lights and purer ideals and surroundings.

But as he rode toward home and Jennie, after the Musgrove killing in Zavalla County above referred to, knowing the pursuit could be but a few hours behind him,—as he revolved these things in his mind, now that he must leave her, possibly forever,—a remorseful thought gnawed at his heart. He had been good to her, much better than McPherson and the others were to their wives, but—and again the thought stung him to hurry his tired horse yet faster.

He looked at her, his heart swelling painfully with regretful tenderness, as she came running to meet him. Poor little thing ! A woman,—just a bit of a girl,—so soft and helpless, and as much, as unquestioningly, his own as his horse or his gun. He asked her gently if she would like to ride over to preacher Clark's and be married.

She looked up at him, speechless with adoring gratitude. If he had come in and given her, unasked, paradise itself, she could not have looked or felt differently. Her cup was full; all hopes, all dreams, had come true; all desire was fulfilled; after this nothing could be too sweet, too blissful, to be possible. She made ready, they rode away, were married, and returned, Jennie in the quiet of absolute, ignorant happiness, Rod in the silence of full and depressing knowledge.

And the Zavalla County posse met them at their own door, the sheriff and four men, and carried Rod away, quiet and unresisting. They left her the pretty marriage certificate and the empty name of wife, the beautiful name she had so longed for; but they took away with them all the pride and delight that belonged with it and made it beautiful—away to jail!

Poor Jennie! It was a blinding fall, from those heights of bliss to this utmost depth of widowed anguish. But after a time her implicit faith in Rod's ability to make all things right reasserted itself, and modified her grief and alarm. Of course she regarded the arrest as a wanton and malicious outrage. She even began to feel almost sorry for a vague, indefinite "them," when she imagined what Rod might do to them when he got out; she was soon thinking of him once more as invincible and ultimately triumphant.

But when Brack Jacox, Rod's partner and his most faithful admirer and adherent, came and told her that Rod himself didn't deny the killing, that Musgrove was a popular man, too, that he had a large following among the toughs of Zavalla, who threatened and talked so loud about lynching that Rod's case had been transferred to Austin and himself removed there for safety, her confidence, which had been only the outgrowth of her ignorance, forsook her utterly.

What would they know, away over at Austin, about Rod? How could they understand that he was the finest man in Texas, and always just right in whatever he did?

They might hurt him! Oh, God! they might— She would go right to them, and tell them.

She consulted nobody; she asked no advice. Her few simple arrangements were made unaided, and the week before Rod's trial came up she was in Austin.

She went directly to the private office of the prosecuting attorney, the man who, according to her way of looking at it, was set to hunt Rod down, and who, unless she could make him see how unjust and wicked it would be, might mistakenly send him away from her love into imprisonment and disgrace,—possibly even to death.

The prosecuting attorney at Austin, at that particular juncture, was a man of most unsavory reputation; a man whose views of humanity, when once drawn out, were so brutally cynical as to repel even the tough circle he affected; one who could not believe in honor, loyalty, or cleanliness of soul, because he himself had never possessed them; and when others showed these nobler attributes he failed to recognize them, because he saw only through the darkened, distaining atmosphere of his own nature.

Rod's wife went directly to this man. She opened the door of his

office without warning or announcement, closed it behind her, and, advancing, stood alone before him. A fine creature she was, barely twenty, with a certain physical majesty about her, despite her youth; and her fresh, fair face, almost beautiful beneath the refining touch of deep feeling, was lit by the vivifying fire of overmastering purpose.

The man with his back to her, at the desk, swung slowly round and faced her; a presence full of aggressive, masterful vitality. A big, broad, unconventional figure, the heavy mane of dark hair thrown back from a small, low forehead; a powerful head and face, set on a short neck; a browbeating eye; thick, sneering lips: it was a countenance of almost brutal strength. When roused to combat, the turning of that aspect upon one was like a physical blow; the look from this man's eye was an actual thrust to move those upon whom it was bent in the direction of his will.

In politics he was a demagogue, never by any mischance firing over the heads of the crowd; despising, and rating below even its sorry value, the very poor quality of human stuff with which he worked. In his profession he was a notoriously successful and unscrupulous criminal lawyer, a man who could fairly hypnotize a jury, and, by the sheer force of his personality and dominating, overwhelming magnetism, secure a verdict almost dead against all their convictions.

This man, swinging quietly round, glanced at Rod's wife with a look of simple inquiry.

She came forward, trembling, and breathing quick through half-open lips.

Too desperately preoccupied with her own anxieties to realize more than that here at last was "the man," she laid her hand upon his desk, and, regarding him fixedly and piteously with her great black eyes, burst into her story with such eloquence as her deep solicitude and long-repressed anguish brought her.

If there was more about how finely Rod could ride, how straight he could shoot, what a splendid fellow he was generally, so smart and handsome, yet so good and kind and noble that he'd never given her a cross word in four years,—if there was more of this than of anything germane to the sudden and irregular taking off of Mr. Musgrove, of Zavalla County, Judge Caswell did not seem to think so.

He listened in indulgent silence, as the passionate young voice went on and on, rising sometimes in sudden, frightened entreaty, sometimes hesitating in broken cadences of artless love; while the rich color flushed and faded in her cheeks, and the big eyes flashed, or filled with tears.

When she had finished, he agreed with her, quietly, that he was the man who could help her. He warned her that his doing so must be kept an entire secret; that this visit, and any subsequent ones she might make to his office, must be carefully withheld from everybody's knowledge.

He looked at her,—and he thought her worth looking at. He applied his usual gauge to her, and believed he knew her well enough. It was scarcely worth while trimming phrases, multiplying guarded

and indirect expressions, with a woman of no more pretensions than this one. She might as well understand that he was a man who gave nothing for nothing, and that he didn't expect to help this husband of hers out of his scrape from pure benevolence, like a man in a Sunday-school book.

When he spoke, the ready complaisance of his opening remarks seemed to Rod's wife no more than Rod's deserts. He even commended her wifely devotion. But when she began to comprehend what inference he drew from her appeal to himself,—what he was calmly assuming and suggesting,—her whole nature turned upon him, like a half-tamed animal when some sudden stroke annihilates all the artificial training, leaving it only a fierce, wild creature, snared, pent, and at bay.

There was no daunting her with that menacing front, no holding her with that compelling eye; it had no potency upon her roused fury.

Jennie's vocabulary had always been a sufficiently womanly one, but it was not in vain that she had lived her life in rough frontier communities. They came to her freely, the fit, belittling epithets she wanted, the bitter taunts, the furious invective, the hot scorn. She was fluent,—affluent,—eloquent.

There was not a feature of his appearance and surroundings, not an incident of his past, present, or future life, occupations, interests, and amusements—as Jennie conceived them—that she failed to deride and stigmatize. She likened his behavior to that of a coyote, his appearance to that of a fat old prairie-dog,—and then begged the pardon of both those despised and outcast animals.

“Me!” she cried, “me! That had a man like Rod! The finest, handsomest, smartest, sweetest thing on earth! To think I would look at the likes o' you,—a mean, sheep-stealin', speckle-faced ol' thing like you!

“F you had as much man in yer whole body as Rod's got in his little finger,” she panted, at the last, “you'd be ashamed to insult his wife, Rod's wife” (her voice broke fiercely on the word), “his helpless wife, when she comes to you tremblin', hopin', an' fearin',—comes beggin' an' prayin' fer justice—fer his life!”

Judge Caswell, with his chair swung back from his desk, listened to her, one fat, mottled hand supporting his chin, while he regarded her, through half-shut eyes, with a curious satisfaction.

When she paused, out of breath, there was absolute silence in the room, so that the ticking of the great gold watch in his pocket could be distinctly heard. Something in the stillness struck cold to Jennie's heart; or perhaps the ticking of the watch was ominously suggestive of the telling of a man's last moments.

She turned and groped blindly for the door-knob. “There,” she said, in a choking but defiant voice, “there, you old swelled-up toad, I've put the rope round Rod's neck now! But I've done just what he'd 'a' wanted me to: I've said his say fer him, when he's shut up an' can't speak fer himself. You can't no more'n kill him; 'n I'll kill myself an' be with him, in spite of you an' everything!”

The fierce, almost exultant defiance of her mood, which had urged

her on to such excess and recklessness in the scene with Caswell, upheld her till she was out of the building and half-way to her boarding-house. But the remainder of the walk was gotten over amid confused buffettings of remorse and apprehension.

Finally there was the one desperate struggle, to repress, or at least conceal, her helpless, impotent tears.

The feeling, of all most bitter, which crushes the heart of the young, ignorant provincial, who in a country isolation and security has felt strong and superior, and who, thrust out into the throng and press of men, finds all the distinction and dignity of seclusion stripped away, leaving but forlornness and contempt,—this feeling, augmented by self-accusings and a horrible belief that she had done the worst that could have been done for Rod, bore cruelly home upon Jennie; and she was stung with the recollection that she, who had been used to tenderness, consideration, and protecting care, had been shamed, insulted, and without defence.

As to the case of the State of Texas *vs.* Roger Merrit, which came up the next week, it was called, and in just fifteen minutes' time fumbled out of existence, with the plain collusion of the prosecuting attorney. Of course this fumbling had some legal names, which are not material here.

Why Judge Caswell should have done all, and more than all, that Jennie would have asked of him, is a thing susceptible of several explanations, none of which might hit the truth.

It could not have been that his higher feelings were touched; because he had none. It is not conceivable that her outburst made a great impression on that indifferent, sluggish spirit: nothing could. Those foul waters had been troubled too often; they were not fluid enough to vibrate from centre to circumference with any shock; the dregs and the slime from beneath were so mingled with them that anything dropped into them fell as dead as though it were dropped in mud.

It is more likely that he was, in a manner, amused—he who had been prosecutor and judge—to hear himself arraigned, fiercely and unspareingly condemned; to feel his power set at naught, himself taunted, mocked, satirized. It is possible that he found a sardonic enjoyment in hearing himself so vilified, scorned, and defied by a pretty creature whose outraged and insulted feelings gave her courage to forget that her hopes were absolutely in his hands; that he liked it, as a fat old *gourmand* likes the whet of a stinging curry or the spur of biting, almost distasteful, dishes.

But it mattered not at all to Rod Merrit, nor to Jennie,—who kept her own counsel, since she knew Rod would have been for shooting him on sight,—it mattered nothing to them what momentary caprice or careless fancy of Caswell's had brought about Rod's release. He was free,—free, and safe. He had come back to her arms out of the very jaws of Death, come back to be her pride and strength and defender, her husband, the light of her eyes, the delight of her heart; and it sufficed.

Alice MacGowan.

ADVANTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.

IN his annual message to Congress, in December last, President Cleveland called the attention of both houses to the invitation which the State Department had received in the autumn from the French government, requesting the participation of the United States in the International Exhibition to be held at Paris in 1900. Since that time a score or more nations have accepted the invitation, including such first-class powers as Russia and Austria-Hungary and two or three South American republics; while the weak opposition to the measure which showed itself last winter for a moment in the French Chamber of Deputies has been overwhelmingly voted down. Thus the question of our taking part in another World's Fair is now ready for solution.

I.

Whenever this subject comes up for consideration at Washington, there is always found in Congress a minority that, either through ignorance of the matter or for demagogic motives, labors to decry it. In 1878, for instance, the minority of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House brought in a report which, while favoring the acceptance of the invitation to the Paris Exhibition of that year and recommending the appointment of a commission, refused to provide any funds whatsoever for salaries or the organization of an American section. The unsympathetic spirit which Congress as a body shows at these times is revealed not only in the debates but in the legislation that follows, marked as it is by tardiness in taking action and stinginess in voting money. And yet it is not difficult to show—which is the purpose of this article—that these periodic gatherings of the nations are a benefit to the cause which America represents in the political world and a real profit to our business interests.

How is the cause which America represents advanced by these international exhibitions? Or, rather, how can we advance at these international exhibitions the cause which America represents? The answer to this question should appeal directly to the very element in Congress that is more or less unfriendly to these enterprises; and the answer is conclusive, it would seem, especially when the fairs are held at Paris, the capital of the second greatest of the republics of the world.

There was much political meaning in the Paris Exhibition of 1878. For several years previous to that date the monarchical and Bonapartist majority in the National Assembly had been exerting every effort to destroy the young republic, which, however, after passing through many perils, finally triumphed. Thereupon the leaders in this important parliamentary and constitutional victory decided to show the world, and especially the royalistic European portion of it, that republican France, quite as well as imperial France, could offer a grand inter-

national exhibition, and that Paris under a President was as much "the city of light" as under an Emperor.

It will scarcely be believed to-day that when republican France was inviting the nations to this *fête* in honor of the establishment of the Third Republic, the United States held back and Congress showed such a languid interest in the occasion that it was feared, almost up to the very last moment, that we might not take part at all.* What a blow this would have been to the republicans of France is revealed in some bits of conversation reported later by our Commissioner-General. M. Léon Say remarked to him, "Your country has contributed largely to our success. It would have been a great disappointment if you had not come." Gambetta's words are still more to the point: "We wanted to show our people the triumphs of genius and industry obtained under your free institutions." And Mr. McCormick himself adds, "It is undoubtedly the fact that, apart from other considerations, the presence of the United States at the Exhibition was especially desired by the government for political reasons."†

And our presence at the last Paris Exhibition was even more agreeable to France, politically, than was the case in 1878. The World's Fair of 1889 commemorated the fall of the Bastile, the denial of the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and, in a word, the advent in Europe of militant republicanism. Hence all the European kingdoms declined to participate officially in that great enterprise, whose marked artistic, financial, and popular success was by the very absence of monarchical approval a grander triumph for the republican idea. That the United States was the only first-class power of the world officially represented there was in itself a splendid fact, which was deeply appreciated in France, as every American knows who was in any way connected with the managers of the Exhibition.‡ Indeed, this was

* Both the French Minister at Washington and the French Commissioner-General at Paris urged action. The latter wrote Mr. Washburne in February, 1877, "Everything leads me to believe that in a few days the United States will be the only nation that has not acted;" and in September General Noyes wrote Mr. Evarts, "Permit me to say that I am very anxious the President should recommend to Congress such action as will insure American representation at the Exposition. It will be a little embarrassing to me if the administration should take no steps in this direction." Commissioner-General McCormick, in his official report to the Secretary of State, says, "The space in the main building originally allotted to the United States had been seriously curtailed, from the general belief in Paris, even in the American colony, that we would not be represented at the Exhibition."

† When in December, 1877,—less than five months before the opening of the Exhibition,—the French government was officially informed of our acceptance of the invitation, M. Waddington, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote General Noyes, "It is with lively satisfaction that I notice this communication, and I would be obliged to you if you would convey to your government an expression of thanks of the government of the republic for a decision which, by assuring the presence of American exhibitors, will contribute to the splendor of the solemnity now preparing in France."

‡ Among the many proofs of this statement may be cited the circumstance that the Hon. Perry Belmont, who, as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, secured the acceptance of the invitation and a larger appropriation than had been granted any previous international exhibition,—\$250,000,—was

one of the potent reasons why, a few months later, the Chicago invitation was responded to so promptly and so generously by the French government, notwithstanding the serious irritation against us which existed in France at that very moment on account of the advent of the McKinley customs régime.*

What has just been said of the Exhibitions of 1878 and 1889 may be repeated for that to be held in 1900, when France is likely to have as her guest, for the first time since the Exhibition of 1867, the great German Empire,† and when the other Continental monarchies, and Russia especially, will vie with one another to remove all memory of the slight cast upon France by their conduct in 1889. France will then have a grander occasion than ever before of showing her rather cold neighbors that democratic institutions have not deteriorated her greatness. And the demonstration will be all the more conclusive, and the hands of France will be immensely strengthened, if, at the same time, the United States takes rank next to France in the completeness, importance, and brilliancy of its exhibit. It may be a long time before democracy and republicanism will again be given such a magnificent opportunity to produce a moral effect on the monarchical world, and nothing—not even the French display itself, which is sure to be all that can be desired in every respect—will make a more powerful and lasting impression than an American section worthy of our position and resources. The early sending of the invitation renders this possible. In order to accomplish this end we have simply to accept promptly, to appoint immediately a strong commission, and to vote a generous appropriation.

II.

But these broad general considerations, these international political purposes,—“sentimental politics” they would be pronounced in some quarters,—which play a large part in a world’s fair invitation from France to the United States, have less weight at Washington, I fear, than the narrower and more humdrum claims of commercial gain and profit. Will we get our money back? is the question that will probably be the oftenest asked both inside and outside of Congress, when this matter comes up for action. Here, too, I hasten to add, everything favors my thesis. Facts and figures alike prove that if we send a fine display to Paris we will not lose in hard cash by so doing. Let me make good this assertion by the aid of examples and statistics. I

made an officer of the Legion of Honor, the first time such a high distinction was ever conferred on an American citizen in connection with an act of that kind.

* On the evening of the day when the French government voted to respond favorably to the Chicago invitation, M. Ribot, at the time Minister of Foreign Affairs, said to the then United States Minister to France, the Hon. Whitelaw Reid, “I believe France has acted before any other power; at least, I hope so.” And, if I am not mistaken, such, in fact, was the case.

† M. Picard, the French Commissioner-General for 1900, informs me that he has every reason to believe that Germany will accept the invitation, which has already been sent to Berlin.

offer, in the first place, one or two isolated cases of how these fairs put money in exhibitors' purses.

The terrible use made by the Communards of 1871 of petroleum for conflagrative purposes produced such an impression on the French mind that people recoiled even at the mention of kerosene. So the American kerosene lamps, which were then just beginning to get a foothold in France, were relegated to the limbo of dangerous innovations. Then came the Exhibitions of 1878 and 1889, with our particularly good show of new, improved, and artistic lamps. The memories of 1871 were quickly forgotten, and to-day the use of candles and the old "pump lamps"—gas has never been a general means of domestic lighting in France—has gone down before the American substitute, which has not only invaded the Parisian bedroom and parlor, but has even found favor in the châteaux along the Loire and has worked its way into the plain homes of the remotest villages. One of the American lamp exhibitors received so many orders during the Exhibition of 1889 that he established a branch store in the best part of commercial Paris, where he has been doing a thriving business ever since.

Let me give an instance of a somewhat different nature,—where one of our home products has been vastly improved by lessons learned abroad. In 1873 Professor Horsford, who was one of the United States scientific experts to the Exhibition of that year, wrote a long and carefully prepared report on how the celebrated Vienna bread was made, which was published by the government. This was followed up by the presence at the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 of the celebrated Vienna bakery, whose loaves and rolls delighted the palate of every visitor to the Centennial. This was a practical and convincing confirmation of the theories and instructions laid down by Professor Horsford in his paper. So if you ask the American housewife to-day to what she attributes the revolution in bread-making which has occurred in this country within the last twenty years, she always declares it to be due to the Vienna bakers who went to Philadelphia in 1876.

But there are other and even more convincing proofs of the direct advantages we gain by participating in these fairs. If you run over the score or more reports written by the specialists sent by the French government to Chicago in 1893, and now being published by the Minister of Commerce, you will find these close and interested observers frequently admitting that our manufacturers, our farmers, and even our artists may, in the near future, not only get along without Europe,—such is already the fact in many cases,—but even (in some instances it is already done) export to France and find a market there for products that France has for years been sending over to us. If such is the confession of these Frenchmen, engaged in the very business about which they are writing, Americans must see that a Paris Exhibition is the best kind of an advertisement for our wares and offers a golden opportunity to accomplish the very end the Frenchmen predict and fear. The official statistics of our government prove this. They show that after these fairs our trade with the countries where the fairs are held

increases, except when, now and then, some financial crisis or tariff legislation interferes with the normal play of the laws governing trade.

III.

Our domestic exports to Austria for the two years preceding the Vienna Exhibition were valued at \$1,630,130 and \$1,460,348 respectively; for the year of the Exhibition—1873—\$1,608,612; while for the year immediately following, the total rose to the highest point attained in the whole series, viz., to \$1,682,249, and in the next year—1875—it still stood at the respectable figure of \$1,662,355.

The figures for the years before and after the Paris Exhibition of 1867 are so affected by the war and reconstruction period as to be of little value. But they tell the same story as the Vienna Exhibition for the years 1878 and 1889. Thus, our domestic exports to France for 1875 were to the value of \$33,172,387; for 1876, \$39,022,829; for 1877, \$44,098,343; and for the year of the Exhibition, \$54,289,918; while during the three years following that event they made the great leaps of \$88,194,041, \$98,889,209, and \$89,844,100, respectively. For the years preceding, including, and following the Exhibition of 1889, the figures are: 1886, \$40,006,096; 1887, \$55,681,994; 1888, \$37,784,237; 1889, \$45,110,922; 1890, \$49,013,004; 1891, \$59,826,739; and 1892, \$97,896,132. It is thus seen that after each of the three great Exhibitions held in Europe during the past quarter of a century our domestic export trade with the country where the Exhibition was held materially augmented. Nor is this all. The same phenomena are to be noted in our commercial relations with most of the other countries exhibiting at these fairs.

Our domestic exports to Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Spain increased in value in the year following the Exhibition of 1873, Russia and Sweden and Norway alone, of the European countries whose statistics I have examined, showing a decrease, and this slight. The year after the Exhibition of 1878, two or three of these countries had a decrease; and after the Exhibition of 1889 the increase was remarkably large in almost every instance, with the single exception of Russia, where there was a falling off of about three million dollars' worth of exportation. Official statistics prove, therefore, that our business grows, after an international exhibition, not only with the country where it is held, but also almost invariably with all the visiting nations.

But even more significant are these statistics if we take a single one of our manufactures and see how these Exhibitions affected its exportation. I have selected for this purpose mowers and reapers, in the manufacture of which we excel, and on the exhibition of which we have always laid much stress. This article shows a maximum result, but several other of our domestic exports show quite as noticeable an increase.

In the year of the Vienna Exhibition, only 551 dollars' worth of these machines were sent from the United States to France, whereas in 1874 and 1875 the figures stood \$104,275 and \$121,961 respectively.

For Belgium no figures are given for 1873; but in 1874 and 1875 they were \$300 and \$39,545 respectively. Unfortunately, no statistics are given on this point for Austria during these same years. For the Exhibition of 1878 the figures in France were: 1878, \$416,453, and 1879, \$412,680; and for the Exhibition of 1889, \$200,259 for 1889 and \$216,535 for 1890. In Austria they were: 1889, \$12,523, and 1890, \$31,356. In Belgium: 1889, \$847, and 1890, \$4089.

And now, having shown that both political and commercial considerations urge our warm co-operation in these international enterprises, let me strengthen my position by quoting the opinions on these various points of some of the scientific experts and official representatives who have been sent by our government to these European gatherings. They are the best authorities on the subject, and their words should carry weight.

IV.

Mr. N. M. Beckwith, who was one of the commissioners at the New York Exhibition of 1853, who was more or less in the councils of the American exhibitors at the Paris Exhibition of 1855, and who was the efficient United States Commissioner-General at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, wrote as follows to Minister John Bigelow, before and apropos of this last-named World's Fair:

“Those who are familiar with the industrial products of England are aware that their prominent qualities are strength, solidity, and utility, and that those of France have always been remarkable for beauty and taste. They cannot have failed to observe, also, since the epoch of international exhibitions, the rapid improvement of English products in graceful forms, beautiful combinations of colors, finer designs, and superior taste, while those of France rise equally in the important elements of strength, durability, and fitness. Similar observations apply in an eminent degree to Belgium, which learns and combines from both; and the same may be said in some degree of other surrounding nations. Nor is this surprising. Inventions, combinations, discoveries, improved methods and processes, spring to light simultaneously in many fertile minds and in many localities of all countries, but the knowledge is slow in spreading itself into general use. Its diffusion is quickened by international gatherings and exhibitions.”

In another part of this same communication Mr. Beckwith says,—

“An exhibition of the products of America in the centre of Europe, well selected and complete enough to be national, showing the mineral and agricultural resources, the state of manufactures, the varieties and quality of our machinery, and the condition of the industrial arts in general, would, in my judgment, produce an impression of surprise analogous to that produced by the disclosures of the war. The strongest impression would naturally fall on the mind of the most intelligent portion of the productive classes, who are the most appreciative in this sense and have the best means of being informed. This is the class of skilled labor and of practical knowledge, whose emigration is highly desirable, but who are the slowest to risk the change. They would see and judge for themselves of the materials, resources, and products;

of the existing conditions and opportunities open to them to better their condition in life. . . . I do not think it chimerical to suggest that an American exhibition, well selected and really national, viewed merely in its economical aspect, is desirable and would return to the treasury, by increased immigration and augmented revenues, more than its cost, however liberal the provisions of Congress."

Still another passage from this letter to Mr. Bigelow deserves quotation, for it is as timely to-day as it was when written, nearly thirty years ago. Mr. Beckwith says,—

"The United States have never participated in these assemblies to the extent naturally suggested by their interests, intelligence, and enterprise, nor derived from them the benefits they might have done. I attribute this to the want of timely information on the subject and provision for the transportation, placement, and proper exposition of objects, and to the absence of the necessary co-operation of the government in aid of the exhibition. . . . The country which taxes itself and appropriates more public money to education than all other countries will readily aid its men of the industrial sciences and the arts to be present with the evidences of their skill in an assembly of nations."

The Hon. Abram S. Hewitt, in a letter written in December, 1866, in support of our participation at the then approaching fair, said,—

"These exhibitions are of the greatest practical importance to us, if we avail ourselves of all the advantages which they offer. First, an opportunity is offered to make known to the intelligence and capital of Europe the great natural advantages of this continent for the cheap production of the great staples of human industry. The exhibition collects together, at one time and in one place, the most intelligent and enterprising men of all nations, who come either as commissioners or visitors. There is unusual freedom from restraint in personal intercourse, and more can be imparted and secured in a few months than could otherwise be possible with years of effort. . . . There is no branch of business, however trivial, which will not be greatly benefited by a knowledge of methods employed abroad in the same department of industry."

The following extracts from the report of the Hon. H. Garretson, Chief United States Commissioner to the Vienna Exhibition of 1873, are apropos of the subject of this article. He writes to the Secretary of State,—

"The American department was not what an American would desire to present as a type of the industry and genius of his country. In splendor and fulness, and in variety of detail, it could not compare with what was shown at Vienna by nations of more limited resources and smaller population. . . . So little had been done to make its value and magnitude known to our people, that public opinion seemed indifferent. There was no emulation among our artisans and merchants. . . . Most of our exhibitors who had articles of a useful character were enabled to secure a ready market in Vienna. Many of them received orders for manufactures that it will take a long time to supply, and your commissioner is confident that a necessary consequence of the introduction of American machinery into the Exhibition

will be to establish a steady, prosperous, and valuable trade between the United States and Austria. I have no statistics available to give you an exact idea of the value of this commerce, but the result of my observation is that we have more than repaid the expense incurred by the government and exhibitors, by opening this new country to American genius and the industry of the future."

The statistics of our trade with Austria immediately after this Exhibition, given on a preceding page of this article, fully carry out the assumption made by Mr. Garretson in the last sentence of the foregoing quotation.

Commissioner-General McCormick, in his official report to the Secretary of State concerning the Paris Exhibition of 1878, declares that "the commercial advantages resulting from it have been of an important character," while General Franklin, who represented our country at the Paris World's Fair of 1889, indulges in these reflections :

"One result of this Exhibition, which, however, has been common to all international exhibitions, is that nations which exhibit get closer to each other in the style of their manufactures, more particularly in that of their steam and other machinery. The technical men, who make a study of exhibitions, examine carefully everything in their own lines of work, and if they see anything in any exhibit which is superior to their articles in that line, they have it adopted in their work. As this is true of the technical men of all the exhibiting nations who are present at an exhibition, the result has been that machines to do the same work in the different nations of Europe and in the United States resemble each other more closely in all respects than they did twenty years ago. The same remarks apply in a less degree to all fabrics. They are more nearly alike now in taste, material, and work than they were when international exhibitions began. Should this approximation continue in international exhibitions that are to follow, the people of the various exhibiting nations must be forced to think more nearly alike, and will, therefore, be brought nearer each other. Such a result must conduce to the benefit of the human race, and will be one of the most important results due to such exhibitions."

The conclusions we reach, then, are these : 1. Political reasons and trade advantages invite our participation in these international exhibitions. 2. The political considerations are especially imperative when the exhibition is held in republican France. 3: Prompt action and a generous appropriation should be expected of Congress, in order that we may have the time and money to prepare a worthy American section. In this instance France has sent out her invitation far earlier than ever before in the history of international fairs. The time requisite is, therefore, attainable. Congress has simply to act without further delay. The size of the appropriation is the only uncertain point, and it is to be hoped that public opinion will demand of Congress an adequate sum. If these two desiderata are obtained, the United States will, for the first time, take her proper rank in these gatherings of the nations of the world.

Theodore Stanton.

HOW HAWKINS WAS REGULATED.

OLD man Hawkins stood in the yard outside the barn. He was dreamily chewing the end of a long spear of timothy, and gazing over the rail fence, beyond the broad, sloping meadow and farther-lying fields, to where a straggling line of willows and elder-bushes, white with blossoms, marked the course of a sluggish creek. Beyond the stream the land lay flat and fertile, green with the promise of rich harvests, and then rose slowly in softly swelling knolls, with here and there a bit of woodland.

But old man Hawkins was not drinking in the soft, rich beauty of that quiet summer afternoon. He was occupied with other things.

"It's the third warnin'," he said to himself, sitting down on a stone-pile that was heaped up in a corner of the rail fence separating the garden-patch from the lane. A scraggy growth of mayweed bordered the pathway, and sprouted up through the frame of a harrow that was lying alongside. The old man's eyes were partially closed.

"Wonder when they put it there?" he thought, still chewing his bit of grass. "Must 'a' been while me 'n' Mandy was to town, fer I 'ain't no recollection o' seein' it this mornin'; and I know 'twa'n't there yesterdat."

He looked up at the barn door, where an irregular piece of paper, insecurely fastened by a few tacks, fluttered in the soft wind.

It was an ominous-looking thing, and might well cause old man Hawkins a bit of uneasiness, though the only evidence that it did was his increased thoughtfulness. On the upper and right-hand sides was a rude sketch of a long blacksnake whip. Underneath appeared the following notice:

YOu Aire OFENSiV to tHe CoMUNiTy.
thE CoMiTE Will Be WitH You SooN.

The signature was in the lower right-hand corner, and consisted of three or four feathers stuck in a big drop of tar.

"Well," said he, slowly turning and looking up the lane, "if they're comin', I presume it's like 'nough they'll be here to-night, and I might jest as well be ready for 'em, seein' as they're sot on comin'."

He got up, and, taking down the unfriendly notice, walked slowly towards the house, pausing once or twice to turn round and take in the lay of the land about his premises; possibly to see if there were any indications of his visitors, possibly to notice from which direction they would probably approach, and possibly to see the way they were most likely to take when they left. At the door of the wood-house he met his wife, who was just starting the fire for supper.

"Did ye know you was likely to have comp'ny this evenin', Mandy?"

"Good land! No. Who?"

"Dunno. Guess, though, there'll be more 'n we want to see, 'cordin' to this here notice." And he handed his wife the scrap of paper with its tar and scrawl.

"Whitecaps!" exclaimed the woman, in alarm.

"Y—yep," drawled the old man, as he leaned up against the door-casing and gazed indifferently out across the fields. "You're right, Mandy; it's the whitecaps; and I reckon they'll be here to-night, too."

"For mercy sakes, Si, you don't say! What on earth you goin' to do?"

"Let 'em come," responded the old man, with a grim smile, "and I rather think some on 'em'll wish they hadn't."

His big, heavy jaw set, the thin lips of the large, firm mouth shut tightly together, and a determined look gleamed from the clear blue eyes: bull-dogs and steel traps could not be more suggestive of rigid, unyielding courage. His wife, who had all confidence in the strength and bravery of her husband, was nevertheless filled with anxiety, though she was not without a good share of those qualities herself.

"What makes you think they'll be here to-night?" she asked.

"Well, ye see, it's the third time I've heerd from 'em, and ye see what the second line o' that there notice says: 'The committee will be with you soon.' Maybe, too, you don't remember that when they visited old Jake Sprowles, time he was livin' on the farm beyant Pike's Corners, 'twas on the night of the same day he got their last warnin'. Hisn was worded sunthin' like this, but I don't jes' remember how."

"That was awfully rough on Sprowles's folks," said Mrs. Hawkins, as she went on into the kitchen with her hands full of chips and kindling. "They ain't never got over it. Old Sprowles is that mean snakes wouldn't bite 'im, but I never thought they'd ought 'o burnt his barns and used the old man like they did."

"Sot the old cuss down in some tar, didn't they?" asked her husband, with a chuckle not indicative that a like fate was threatening him.

"H'm-h'm," answered his wife; "took 'im out 'thout a stitch on 'im. He was hidin' anunder the bed. They spanked him with a piece of rough pine, and set 'im down in a lot of tar first and then in a lot of feathers. It took Mis' Sprowles the awf'lest time to git that tar off. She told Sam Perkins's wife she used more'n a gallon o' turpentine. Th' old feller was so raw and sore with the spankin' and slivers and scrubbin' with turpentine that it was three months afore he could git round."

"Do you think you'd like a job o' scrubbin' tar off'n me, Mandy?" asked her husband, dryly.

"Lord, Si, you ain't old Sprowles, and I don't calculate you'd sit in no tar without makin' somethin' of a fuss afore you did; though as to scrubbin' it off, I rather think I could do it, if it comes to that. But if you're expectin' them fellers to-night I should think you'd better be decidin' what you're goin' to do, and not waste any more time standin' there chewin' grass. It's goin' on to six o'clock now."

"You're right, Mandy, I ain't old Sprowles, and it ain't my intention to sit in no tar; but jes' give me time to think. They won't be

here till after midnight, and a pile can be done 'tween now 'n' midnight. You jes' go along and make them biscuit."

"You can't git no help from the neighbors," said Mrs. Hawkins, continuing her preparations for supper, while her husband still occupied the door-way. "The stand you've took about the stock runnin' on the highways has put 'em all ag'in' you. There ain't anybody I can think on as 'd be of any use, 'thout 'twas the Raymond boys; but that's too far away; besides, I heerd in town to-day that one of 'em's away and the other down sick."

"The Raymond boys'd be good help, but they can't be had. I guess we'll hev to depend on ourselves, Mandy. As far's I'm concerned, I ain't afeared. Do you think you could fire a gun?"

"I don't know: I guess I could; but I shouldn't want to kill anybody, Si." And the big, motherly woman paused for a moment with her hands in the flour.

"I don't want you to kill nobody, Mandy; I don't want to kill nobody myself; but if any sneakin' whitecap comes monkeyin' round this band-wagon he must expect to hear the drum. And what you say 'bout the neighbors makes me think; I'll bet anything that or'n'y crittur down the road there is hand-in-glove with the whole crew."

"Do you mean Bill Leukins?"

"Sure as preachin'. If once I git my hands on that feller, I'll warm his jacket worse 'n ever old Sprowles's was, and I won't use no tar, neither." And old man Hawkins rose up his full, brawny height. He brought down his great, bony fist on the wall of the shed with such force that it split the siding.

Silas Hawkins was noted throughout that county for his great strength and unflinching courage. He had served through the war; and after its close, for many years, he had travelled with an old-fashioned circus. Sleeping out of doors, driving tent-stakes, and lifting heavy weights had hardened his muscles and strengthened his sinews till he had become a marvel among his fellows. By dint of hard work and careful living, he had saved up enough money to purchase this farm, where he had lived now for over fifteen years, a steady, industrious, valuable man. He was always on the side of peace and order, and had served the community in various official capacities where courage and determination were required. At present he held the office of road supervisor, and had aroused no small amount of antagonism by strictly enforcing the law prohibiting stock from running at large on the highways. "Twa'n't no odds to him," he said, "if folks was so mean an' shiftless as to let their cows go wanderin' round the country, breakin' down fences and destroyin' their neighbors' craps. As for him, his fences were allers up, 'n' fer keeps, too. There wa'n't no cow in that quarter-section as could push 'em down, neither. But if the people wanted their cattle runnin' round loose, what 'n Sam Hill was there a law ag'in' it fer? 'Cordin' to his way o' thinkin', laws was made to be kept; and, as it was his dooty to enforce that one, he was goin' to do it, in spite of hell 'r high water."

And he did.

Notwithstanding all protests and abuse, cattle were impounded and

people fined, to the great relief and satisfaction of many farmers, and to the bitter wrath of others. Unfortunately, there was a large number of these others,—a rough, improvident, and lawless set, who were accustomed to express their disapproval of a man's actions by nocturnal visits in disguise and the perpetration of deeds of violence. Several attempts had been made to break up the gang, but they were numerous and had many sympathizers: so that up to the present all such efforts had been without avail.

Ever since Mr. Hawkins had begun his crusade against the live-stock nuisance, it had been whispered about that the old man had better be pretty careful how he played the boss. That community wa'n't no circus caravan, to be driven by the likes o' him. But it was not generally thought that any one would dare to molest old Hawkins. The whitecaps had so far never appeared in bands of more than fifteen or twenty, and then at remote farm-houses where there was little or no danger of resistance. It was a sure thing that if they, or any one else, attacked the Hawkins place, some one would get hurt.

The old man was not easily terrified. When he found the first notice of the regulators fastened to his barn door one sunny morning in April, he looked upon it as pure bluff, and said nothing. In May there came another; but the time that had elapsed since their first warning was so much greater than usually intervened between their notices that he gave it no second thought, after remarking to his wife that he had heerd from them varmints ag'in, but guessed they dassent do very much, for they didn't seem to be in no great hurry. And now, late this afternoon, he had found a third notice with every indication that it would be followed up by a visit before morning, for their delay meant his preparation. The whip and the tar were significant. Nobody could tell what they might not do about the place; uproot the garden; drive off the stock; burn the barns: there was no villany at which they would stop.

The old man walked around the house, and when he returned to the kitchen his mind was made up on a few points.

"Them fellers will come in a body; they'll come by the road, and from the south, too; see if they don't."

"What makes you think so?" asked his wife.

"Well, it's easier goin' in the road after dark than clim'in' fences 'cross country, as they'd have to do comin' from the east, besides goin' through that piece o' timber and crossin' the marsh; and there ain't anywhere to come from on the west and north. They'll meet down there near Leukins's place, and come up here afoot. The north side the yard is well 'nough protected by that hedge. All we've got to look out for is the other three sides; and I guess I might 's well be seein' about it now."

He started out, but on reaching the door he turned.

"Mandy, I shall want to use some o' your clothes-line. Is this it hangin' here in the shed?"

She said it was.

"And, Mandy, I wish you'd have a little melted taller fer me when I come in; 'bout as much as I use fer greasin' boots."

"All right," she answered. "But what on earth he wants o' melted tallow is beyond me," she thought, as he went out.

Silas Hawkins's methods of defence were certainly original, but none could have been better adapted to the circumstances. The house-lot fronted west on the road. To the north was an enormous wheat-field, separated from the yard by a thick hedge of Osage orange, that neither man nor beast could penetrate. The old man was clearly right when he said the place was protected on that side. On the south was a large hay-field, extending back below the barn and surrounded by an ordinary board fence. Back of the house and separated from all else by a high rail fence was the garden-patch, and between this and the meadow on the south ran the little lane from the door-yard to the barn.

In the shed were two big rolls of barbed wire, to be used in the autumn for new fences. Old Hawkins's mouth stretched out in a broad grin as he lifted these and "toted" them over into the meadow, where he unwound them, starting from the road and going back almost to the barn, leaving great, loose coils of the wicked stuff in the high grass behind him as he went. When he had finished there were three lines of this unique abatis to entangle any one who might chance that way. From the back of the house he stretched three lines of barbed wire to the garden fence, the first about as high as a man's neck, the second a foot lower and several feet farther south; still lower and more removed was a third.

"Mandy," said he, sticking his head into the kitchen, "I guess you'll have to let me have that factory cloth you bought to-day."

"All right," answered Mandy. "But can't you come to your supper now, Si? It's all ready."

"Lemme see," said he, looking up at the clock. "Half-past six: it's light till nigh on to eight. Yes, I guess I might's well eat now as any time."

He hurried through his supper.

"They was some tar left over from sheep-markin', wa'n't they, Mandy?" he asked, getting up from the table.

"Yes," she answered, "'bout half a keg. It's standin' in the corner o' the shed, behind the soap-bar'l. But what on earth do you want tar fer?"

"I'm goin' to fix some o' them fellers so's they won't git grub in the head," replied her husband, as he took up the bundle of sheeting and left the kitchen.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the good woman, looking after him through the vines that trailed over the kitchen window. "If he ain't a queer one!"

Glancing out from time to time as she went about clearing away the tea-things, she saw him measure off two lengths of factory cloth the width of the lane. Going down towards the barn, he spread them out on the ground from fence to fence and about three feet apart. Then he smeared the upper surfaces with a thick coat of tar, and on the side towards the house a little in advance he stretched a clothes-line about a foot from the ground, tying it securely to the fence on either

side. Every now and then he would chuckle to himself, as though enjoying his work immensely.

"Can't I help ye 'n any way?" asked his wife, as he returned to the kitchen.

"I dunno but what you kin; but first git me the biggest needle ye got, 'n' the coarsest linen thread, 'n' some beeswax. Now," said he, as she brought him the articles, "if you min' to pour that melted taller over about two cupfuls o' that small shot, and let it dreen off, and then sift a lot o' kyanne pepper over it, you'll be helpin' me right smart."

While his wife was doing this, Silas cut a grain-bag half in two, and filled the lower part nearly two-thirds full of beans. This he tried to sew together just above the line of filling, so as to make a tight, hard mass.

"Don't you want a thimble?" asked his wife.

"Lord, no; I couldn't never use no thimble. When my old thumb-nail won't do the business, I jes' use the chair-bottom, or table, or anything that's handy, to jam down on."

Meanwhile Mrs. Hawkins prepared the shot according to directions, sneezing violently when it came to handling the red pepper.

"Goodness me, Si," said she, stopping to blow her nose, "you must 'a' took me fer a whitecap."

"I guess I've mistook sunthin', fer I'm prickin' the stuffin' out o' my thumbs, and ain't doin' nothin', neither. You let me do that, and you finish this. Sew it tighter 'n blazes, so there won't be no givin' way."

The grease hardened quickly on the cold shot, and a plentiful supply of pepper stuck to the grease. Old Hawkins brought out a musket and a double-barrelled shotgun. These he loaded with the pepper-incrusted shot.

"That ain't goin' to kill nobody, but I guess it'll warm 'em up some," said he, grimly. "Both on 'em scatters like fun, and what they won't hit hes to be mighty fur off or else back on 'em. Tell you what 'tis, Mandy, Brother Jon'than's helped to squash one big rebellion, and I guess his usefulness ain't over with yet," said he, handling the old musket with a pride and tenderness that were heroic.

"Here's your what-ye-may-call-it," said his wife, handing over the bean-sack.

"Oh, yes, that buster: I mustn't forgit that. They's a powerful lot o' salvation in one o' them things. They don't look it, but they is."

He went into the yard and got a straight, well-seasoned hickory pole from the hay-rack, about six feet in length. To the end of this, with strongest, well-waxed sheep twine, he tied the sack of beans, allowing it a little freedom for movement, and thus completed what he called his "buster." He swung it around the great, roomy kitchen with a whiz.

"For evermore, Si! do be careful! you'll hit the lamp."

"There, Mandy, that's sunthin' like," said he. "And now I reckon it's about time we was organizin' our plan o' campaign. You 'n' Brother Jon'than'll hold the base of supplies, while me 'n' the buster and shotgun'll be the skirmish-line and advance to the front.

Lemme see: it's nine o'clock now. Them fellers'll be here 'tween twelve and one, or a little later. You 'n' Brother Jon'than be posted in that front poller bedroom winder, and if any one tries to come onter the porch or round the house from the north side, you jes' let 'em see what Brother Jon'than's made of."

"Mercy on us! How shall I do it?"

"Jes' rest the bar'l on that lattice that's ag'in' the winder, and squint along the top of it, like this; 'n' when that little sight there looks as though 'twas coverin' up your mark like, let 'er go, Gal-lagher."

"Land sakes!" exclaimed his wife, "you talk as though 'twa'n't nothin' to shoot a human creetur. Who'd 'a' thought I'd ever come to doin' it!"

"Mind, though," continued Silas, "that you don't hold the brich too close to your shoulder. Brother Jon'than's a little out o' practice now, 'n' 's liable to go back on ye."

Mrs. Hawkins thought she would remember.

"I want to git between them 'n' the road," said the old man: "so I'll jes' squat down behind that evergreen out there in the corner o' the yard 'n' wait my chances. I guess I'll put buster behind that posy-bush that's a little nearer the gate. He'll come in handy 'bout there."

It was a beautiful, still night. A few high cloud-masses floated in the clear, dark-blue spaces, silvered and softened by a moon not yet in full circle. In the marshes sounded the sharp, castanet-like voices of the frogs; and from the little grove at the bend in the road came the rich, sad notes of a whippoorwill.

Shortly after midnight, old man Hawkins drank a glass of buttermilk, and, taking "buster" and the shotgun, started out-doors, telling his wife to lock up everything and put out the light.

"S'posin' they should git the best of you, Si? What then?" asked Mrs. Hawkins, becoming more anxious as the time for their expected visitors approached.

"Mandy," said he, looking back from the darkness of the half-open door-way, "they ain't a-goin' to git the best o' me."

The door closed. She heard him walk past the window, and then everything was quiet. She put out the light, and took her station in the parlor bedroom with the big musket. After her eyes had become accustomed to the shadows, she thought she could distinguish a dark mass behind the evergreen. It might be Silas, though she was not certain. Once there was a sound as of approaching steps, but it turned out to be only the horses in the barn.

The excitement of unpleasant expectation was not enough to overcome the combined influences of the hour and the tranquil noises of the night. Her head nodded. Suddenly she recovered herself with a start. There was a blurred sort of murmur on the night air. Peering through the vines, she saw a solitary figure standing near the gate. There could be no mistake, for the moonlight shone clear around him. It was a man, and the grotesque disguise of white that he wore about his head told plainly enough what he was and on what business he had come. In a moment he was joined by others, and then the whole

front seemed to swarm with them. Mandy's heart beat faster than it ever had done before. She could count twenty-five or thirty, but to her excited mind there appeared more like fifty. Two were carrying something like pails, and another had a big, bulky load, suggestive of feathers. What could Si do against so many?

One went along up the road, and the rest entered the yard. They were all armed with whips. Three walked slowly around to the back of the house, taking the accustomed path. Three filed off to guard the south side, and three more went around to the north. The rest spread out in an irregular group across the front.

What their next move would have been cannot be known, for at that instant the entire posse was startled by the loud bang of a gun close behind them. There was a howl of pain, and several made a break towards the gate; but Silas was there before them. From that direction also came a flash and report which drove them back, surprised, confused, and smarting with wounds that burned like fire. In an instant, while they were still unable to see anything for the smoke, a tall, brawny figure, brandishing some unknown kind of weapon, was upon them. A thick, heavy sound, followed by a grunt, could be heard as whitecap after whitecap was struck by some terrific force, lifted bodily off his feet, and sent sprawling headlong. There was an attempt on the part of the regulators to use their horsewhips, but to no purpose. The tall figure with the terrible weapon seemed to be everywhere at once, always out of reach, and always between them and retreat. Like a flock of sheep, they one and all stampeded for the meadow fence. With Silas's help, several went over more quickly than they intended.

"Dern ye," he shouted, "'tain't only cows 'n' horses I'm 'posed to havin' at large, but calves and hogs as well. Whee, whee!"

Under the unusual strain, the top boards of the fence gave way, and the regulators tumbled helter-skelter upon the loose coils of barbed wire.

That was all the old man wanted. He turned his attention to those who had gone to the back of the house. Upon them he rushed like a cyclone. One of them he recognized.

"Bill Leukins," he yelled, "if once I sot hand to your hide they won't be 'nough left fer soap-grease."

Bill Leukins trembled, for it was he, and, turning, fled with all his might down the lane. Panic was in the air that night. His two companions, seeing the general rout in front, turned and fled with him. One attempted to climb the garden fence. Old man Hawkins dealt him such a blow as he was getting over that the top rail broke and the fellow tumbled backwards, stunned by the blow. Down the lane fled the third man, after Bill Leukins. Bill's foot hit the clothes-line first, and he found himself prone upon the tarred sheeting. His comrade was close upon him. Bill heard the steps and thought it was the mighty Silas. With a great effort he rose half-way, only to be dragged down; the other fugitive had also struck the clothes-line and fallen upon the sticky cotton. In the darkness and excitement, each thought the other an enemy, with whom he grappled desperately. Silas found

them inextricably stuck and twisted up with each other. He snatched up the ends of the sheeting and wrapped them about the men, gluing them head and heels like flies. There was no escape.

"Gosh!" exclaimed the old man, wiping the perspiration from his forehead with his sleeve, "I 'ain't had so much fun since the tiger got loose and had a scrap with the el'phunt."

Just then a rattle of musketry sounded from the front of the house, followed by a dull crash that jarred the windows.

"Thunder 'n' blood!" said he, "that's Mandy," and hurried round to see.

The three men who were guarding the north side, hearing the noise, supposed the attack was from the rear, and thought that by going round the house they could execute a flank movement, so they started in that direction. They had gone but a few steps when the one in advance stopped abruptly and began to swear. The barbed wire had sawed his face from ear to ear.

"Duck!" he called.

The others ducked, but fared no better. Stooping lower, they encountered the third strand, and after extricating themselves beat a retreat around by the front.

Mandy had seen the tide of battle sweep south and eastward, and had noted with satisfaction the way it was turning, when three men suddenly appeared from the opposite direction. They were very near the house. She thought they were making for the door. It was time for her to prove her mettle. Snatching up her lapboard, she placed it before her expansive abdomen, and held the butt of the musket close against it. To the best of her calculation she pointed the muzzle in the direction of the invaders; she shut her eyes tight, and pulled the trigger.

Brother Jonathan was effective at both ends. A whitecap fell, cursing with pain and rage. From their exclamations, the others were evidently not untouched, but they seized their companion and ran towards the gate. Simultaneously with the report Mrs. Hawkins experienced a violent shove backwards,—so violent, indeed, that she sat down without noting the absence of anything to sit on. That was the crash Silas heard.

"Ye ain't hurt, be ye, Mandy?" called the old man, looking in the window.

"N—no," came the answer from the darkness, "but sunthin' must ail that pesky old musket o' yours. I never hearn o' guns actin' like that before. Where's the whitecaps?" she asked, opening the door.

"Dunno. Two on 'em's wollerin' together down the lane, an' I guess I've knocked the stuffin' out'n another. The rest on 'em's been havin' a play-spell in the medder. Guess I'd better go 'n' see that they don't spile the hay."

He found one fellow, evidently hurt, still struggling with the wires.

"What the blazes ye doin' here?" asked the old man. "Git out o' this." And he swung the buster.

"Fer God's sake, don't hit me wi' that thing ag'in," implored the man. "It's did me up a'ready."

"Who be ye, anyway?" asked old Hawkins. "Stop tryin' to git away so fast. I won't hurt ye. Why, by the jinglin' gosh! it's Pete Leukins. Well, Pete, I've got yer dad where I guess he ain't goin' to do much hurt fer a spell; an', seein' as some one'll be needed to your place to look arfter chores in the mornin', I guess you'd better run home. Hold stiddy. There, now you're out. Git over the fence an' go by the road, an' ye won't have any more trouble. An' say, Pete," called Silas, as the young man slowly limped off, "if ye meet any o' your friends down the road, tell 'em I got a heap more o' that peppered shot left, and buster ain't stretched a seam. If they want to do any business with me afore mornin', or any time arfter, I'm here and willin'."

Pete hobbled off without making reply.

The old man walked down the lane, where he found the two white-caps about worn out and suffocated. He had to cut their whiskers in order to get the tarred cloth from their faces. Then he bundled them into the corn-crib and locked the door. Another culprit he found skulking in the smoke-house, and fastened him in.

"Mandy," said he, going into the house when everything was quiet, "git me another glass o' that buttermilk. Gosh, but 'twas fun to see Bill Leukins and that other cuss stuck to one another tighter 'n brothers. What a sight they'll make when I drive 'em into town in the mornin'! Guess them fellers ain't goin' to do no more whitecappin' round here right away," he added, pulling off his boots and getting ready for bed.

And they didn't. That was their last raid; for the torn and spotted condition of many hands and faces, the amount of "rheumatiz in the back and legs" that many suffered with for some time after, and the state's evidence given by that "pusillan'mus cuss Bill Leukins," brought the major portion of the organization to trial and punishment. Some cleared out to other parts.

For the remainder of his days old man Hawkins was looked upon by the community as a kind of liberator; but whenever any one praised him for what he accomplished that night, he would always say,—

"Yes, but I never could 'a' done it 'thout Mandy. She sewed the buster, and buster was what fixed 'em."

Henry A. Parker.

IN PLATTE CAÑON.

A MOUNTAIN eyrie,—a perfect day;
Care left in the toil-world far away.
Nature, forgetting that she is old,
Flirts and flutters in green and gold,
Waked to new life at the sun-god's kiss.
Ah, who could be old, a day like this,
This golden day in the hills?

Mary E. Stickney.

"COMPANY."

WHEN I was a child, there was no word in our language more expressive to me of all that was mildly terrible than "company." It meant unreasonable restraint, and the necessity of spotless clothing, a painfully stiff collar, and clean hands,—everything, in fact, that a small boy of average health and spirits naturally detests. Then, too, there was the showing off of infantile accomplishments, and a general disarrangement of every childish idea of comfort. I learned at five to detest "company," and at fifty I have not outgrown the impressions then acquired. I do not like company. Not that I am afraid of strangers, nor that, being a householder, I am inhospitable; but "company"—well, I am at a loss to express my real meaning. I remember an old neighbor, an uncouth creature, a contemporary of my grandfather, who was accustomed to declare that a brief call was a "vis," to spend the day, a visit, and to stay overnight, a visitation. This may not have been original with him, but it was a pithy way of putting the matter, and has been my law and gospel on this subject ever since.

Of what earthly use is "company"? You probably see your neighbors once a week, meeting them on the public highways, and if you nod pleasantly, and speak a word or two of the weather and of the health of the family, has not everything been done that necessities require or formality can reasonably demand? If you have business or need information that others can give you, go and ask of them. Be brief, but to the point, and, leaving with what is desired, carry away also their blessing. To go to another's house, to request of its inmates, one or all, to sit for half an hour or longer and listen to your platitudes, and, coming away, lie to them about a pleasant call, is intolerable. Yet there are thousands who do this daily. Why should I leave my occupation, be it loafing even, and give my attention to some man or woman who is thoughtless enough to "call"? The actuating motive never appears. Much is spoken and nothing said. I receive no worthy thought to profit by or increase the probability of a beatific eternity. The familiar well-gnawed bones of doctrine fall from the devil's table. Usually I am forced to breathe, at such a time, a gossip-poisoned atmosphere. This "call" is another's idea of civility, and I am compelled, it appears, to be a victim of his or her whim. If I refuse, as I have done point-blank, to present myself, I am called a boor and all manner of ugly names. Well, is it not better to be called black as night, and know that you have the whiteness of mid-day in your heart, than to be called civil, while you are cursing the thoughtlessness of the company that has called? That is my view of the matter.

The world professes to hold in righteous indignation a hypocrite; but how are we to escape hypocrisy if we become the slaves of company? It has often been said that the set phrases of formal social customs are understood by everybody and no harm is done. Perhaps so, but I am concerned more with the harm I do myself than with

that I cause to others. If I have one possession above another that I value, it is my time, my living, my concerns with myself; and there is no surplusage to be bestowed upon formalities that bring neither pleasure nor profit and do not redound to my credit in any way in which the subject can be looked at. I insist that there is nothing churlish in this view. I have not those in mind whom I call my friends, but the average caller, the "company" that is dying—but, alas, never dies—to know what your most secret thoughts have been that day, so that he or she may announce them to some other victim of his or her calling list. This is not evidence that I am averse to a lively chat over the fence with my next-door neighbor, nor that I do not love to discuss old times with a former playmate when we meet. All such occurrences—and they have an added charm when happening by chance—are delightful and of quite another character: they are as honest, outspoken, and hearty as that sweetest music in the world, the laughter of childhood. The frankness of a pleasant meeting is as refreshing and soul-satisfying as the formalities of "company" are arid and degrading.

We had company to-day. I was asked for,—as if one victim were not sufficient,—and, as often happens, declaring I would not appear, appeared. Luckily my memory was in working order, and I put it to a severe test. Now, an hour after the plague has ceased to trouble by its presence, those soft, sibilant, loud whisperings remain. The company took just fifty minutes to inform me that I was looking well; that I was looking extremely well; that I never looked better. Pleasant sounds, doubtless, are such words to those who are really ill, notwithstanding their inapplicability; but I am in ordinary health. I was also told that the weather had been unpleasant, very unpleasant, positively disagreeable; and, as I had not been house-bound for a month, this was scarcely complimentary to my powers of observation. All the while, I never opened my lips, unmoved by madam's black looks, which I interpreted aright. The company were persistent, and attacked me from another quarter: Did I think we should have pleasant weather soon? I remained silent for a moment, and was about to reply, when another question was put: Will there be a pleasant summer? This was somewhat staggering. How was I to know the character of the coming season? I smiled, hypocritically of course, and replied that I hoped for pleasant weather in the next world, but did not dare to prophesy as to this. The fools tittered. I supposed I had scored a success at meeting formal company, and was heaving an inaudible sigh of relief, when the guests rose to depart; but it seems that my part was not well done, and madam scolded me for rudeness. I am convinced, now, that I cannot become a successful formalist, and I understand that our callers agree with this. They call me a boor and other significant names; but then, out of the parlor I am abundantly happy, and doubtless my days will not be shortened by my lack of appreciation of their valueless inanities.

Is it, seriously speaking, necessary for one to part company with a bird or a flower, to leave the open air for a stuffy room and miss music and beauty, that a caller may have opportunity to assure you that two and two make four? Even if the caller has knowledge—his alone,

it may be—that he is willing to impart, how is he to know that I will value it? It may be that I am wrong,—that such a course, if general, would check the world's progress; but I am not convinced. Who, indeed, are those that have furthered progress so far,—the chattering gad-about, the caller, our "company," or those who value their time and are not willing to sit idly by and be talked at by anybody and everybody who happens to call?

An honest meeting of man with man is usually an accidental one. Often, seeing them approach, for the lane is long and straight, I have hastened to the hill-side, to be rid of the obnoxious callers. Here, if in summer, I let the songs of thrushes entertain me, or, in winter, listen to the titmouse, that is always cheerful, or watch the long lines of roostward-flying crows. I have never yet wearied of this, or found such conditions to lose their suggestiveness. When to-day's company had gone and madam's lecture was ended, I hurried to the farm's most unfrequented corner and rested at the mossy stile, over which so few pass these later years, for the once well-worn foot-path is now torn yearly by the plough. While I tarried, I was hailed by a hearty man who lives close to nature.

"Have you heard the eagles scream to-day?" he asked.

"No," I replied: "are there any about?"

"Do you think I would ask you what I did, if it was an impossible thing?" he replied, with a trace of anger in his voice.

I was deservedly snubbed. Here was a man who knew every nook and corner of the land, every tree, bush, flowering plant, beast, and bird; and to think that I should have expressed a doubt of his sincerity! That trifling "company" had been too much for me. I looked my regrets, and the old man read my eyes.

"Yes," he said, in his usual earnest manner, "there was a grand pair of eagles here at sunrise, and they screamed until the hill-side trembled with their rage. They soared until out of sight, and then came swooping down until the tree-tops were moved by their wings, and all the time one or the other screamed till you would have thought their throats would crack. Not another bird along the hill-side opened its bill. It was as still as winter, till they were gone, miles down the river; and then what a chatter the crows set up! You might have thought they had driven the eagles off and were crowing over their victory."

This is such knowledge as I am ever ready to receive. I am always on the lookout for eagles, and my friend has been more fortunate than I. His wealth he is ready to divide, seeing it does not diminish by so doing. I am the gainer, yet he is not a loser. Such meetings make me thankful I am not alone in the world. But what had I to offer as an equivalent? He had given me also of his time, which I knew was held at its full value by him, and was I to receive this as a gift? I was humbled by the thought that I had not power to make adequate return, and would at least have admitted as much; but my friend could read me as he did the wild world about him, and said, as he turned to leave me, "You are glad to know that I have seen eagles to-day, and I am glad to be able to tell you."

His recompense was the knowledge of having been of use to another. I had not thought of that. Such people have no time to call; for them, there are no moments to be spent in formulating phrases that are empty; but meeting you while on their way, as here at the stile, they bless you with weighty words and leave you wiser than before. We cannot "keep" such company; it is vouchsafed to no one as an every-day feature of his life; but it may sparkle through his years, here and there, like flakes of gold in quartz.

I have argued in this strain for years, finding no one to agree; yet every year strengthens my conclusions. Of course, folks will not cease to "call" until the crack of doom, and many will be on their way to their neighbors when they hear it. They hold themselves as philanthropic people, but I would that every one was to a greater extent misanthropic rather. Speaking for myself, it is a positive pleasure, whenever I think of it, that I grew up a savage. The plain, modest, and compact flower of misanthropy has been too long neglected. Plant it where it will be most often seen, and let its blossoms influence our lives to a greater symmetry.

Charles C. Abbott.

A PAINTING OF APELLES.

NOT many years ago Giorgios Kallipoulos, a young and gifted artist, was living in Athens with his master, old Validelēus. His master had learned his art in the old-fashioned way, and his mind was contented with the tasks that fell to his lot. He passed his life in going from village to village and town to town in Greece, painting frescos for the new chapels and churches built at small expense. His work satisfied him and his patrons, but it did not satisfy his pupil. After time-honored patterns he painted, on the moist wall, the scriptural scenes most in demand: Jesus, the friend of children; Mother Mary with the divine babe in her lap; and the whole troop of saints, each with a glowing aureole. That was all he had learned, when a youth at Constantinople, and he deemed it enough. He always despatched his work, and he was glad when the priest had paid him a small heap of silver drachms and he could adjourn to a cosy hostelry where fiery Samian wine was kept.

Giorgios, however, was different. In his veins coursed the hot, ambitious blood of the true artist. He had seen some canvases of modern painters, some of Corot and Duran and Troyon, and he was sure that his master's methods were not theirs.

"Do not fret thyself, my son," calmly said old Validelēus when the passionate youth upbraided him for not striving for something higher. "The old masters of Greece, those from whom we hold our art, painted as we do. Their colors are ours, their poses are like those on my pictures. Do not fret thy spirit: remain and learn." And then he emptied his goblet of wine, and his dark face grew a shade darker. But Giorgios sighed and tossed his head impatiently. And all the

while he sketched and sketched, with chalk or pencil or ink, whatever was handiest, all the things that appealed to his artist's eye : a peasant from the North in short jacket and wide fustanella ; a beggar-boy on the Acropolis, selling spurious antiquities to tourists ; dogs fighting ; or a group of carpenters at their toil. And the old master shook his head at this waste of time, but he saw that the spirit within the youth sought for an outlet, and he said nothing, either in derision or in encouragement.

One day the master and his pupil were sent for to repair the frescos in a famous old orthodox chapel up on the Oeta mountain. Giorgios was drunk with the joy of seeing the grandly wild and rugged landscape. He sketched the scraggy cliffs and steep rocks, the dying sun in his bath of blood, and the storm that burst on the heights. And in a clump of walnut-trees he found a woodsman holding his little boy between his knees and teaching him how to pray to the saints with clasped hands. And immediately Giorgios began to sketch : it was like Saint Joseph and the boy Saviour. And the sketch was so full of power and expression and piety that even old Validelus was touched, and begged his pupil to reproduce the sketch over the altar of the chapel.

This, then, Giorgios did, and while deep in his work one hot afternoon the door of the cool chapel opened, and a man, a hooded, bearded friar, entered.

"Well done, my son," the friar broke the stillness ; "but thou lackest the technique, and thy colors are vile."

"But my master tells me all the painters of our day use the same colors," replied Giorgios.

"True, but in the olden times it was not so. But thou wilt never learn to paint as they did, for the secret is sacredly guarded."

"Where?"

"Up on Mount Athos, by the holy fathers of the monastery. There I have seen paintings such as no living man can paint. But the holy fathers there keep the secrets of the past well, and what Apelles, what Protogenes, Pausias, and Zeuxis, knew, they know. Parrhasios, the cenobite, preserves an original painting by Apelles, the only masterpiece of ancient times that has survived the mould of ages. But no mortal will ever carry away the secrets of Mount Athos across the steep barrier of the isthmus. So I say unto thee, my son, Become a monk and wend thy way to Athos, and thou wilt create immortal works." And Giorgios drank in every word. The thirst for immortality, for fame, awoke in him. And August came, and with it the Feast of Panegyris. To the Athos ! to the Athos !

With thousands of pious pilgrims he climbed the beetling brow of Mount Athos and penetrated into the monastic republic which comprises more than a score of cloistered entities. He knocked at the door of the Abbot of Laura and implored admission. The worthy prelate wondered at the handsome, passionate youth who at his feet confessed his sins and swore never to return into the world. He nodded kindly and turned the young man over to the master of novices. With the torments of ambition, of knowledge, in his soul, the new novice ex-

ceeded all in penitential devotion. But only the one thought had possession of him,—to learn soon the secret of his art and with it to escape beyond the isthmus. During the hours of rest the novice painted ceaselessly,—the saints, and the scenes of bliss and damnation which his hot imagination conjured up before him. One canvas, Christ tempted in the desert, was such a masterwork that his superior took it to the abbot.

"He will become one of our best artists," said the prince of the monastery, after carefully scanning the painting. "Is he mature for ordination?"

"If not he," murmured the master of novices, "nobody ever will be."

And so Giorgios was ordained, and, after solemn pledges, he was given in charge of Parrhasios, the most eminent of the cowed artists, who dwelt in solitude in a clearing of the oak forest.

Parrhasios it was who once had discovered, on an ancient panel of larch wood which had for many centuries formed the back of a small altar in the Church of the Conception on Mount Athos, the famous painting of Apelles. Alexander the Great was represented on it, holding the forked lightning in his outstretched hand. And, after carefully removing the rosin-like varnish that covered this painting, it had come out in all its pristine beauty, the luminous, glowing colors as fresh as if painted but yesterday. The abbot, though, ordered Parrhasios to keep the treasure hidden behind a screen of rushes, and to show it only to the elect few, for were it known that the monastic republic harbored such a priceless jewel the greed of man would be aroused, and evil would betide them all.

From Parrhasios the youth acquired the art of preparing and mixing and preserving those wonderful colors which the ancients had possessed in an unrivalled degree. But a year and a day elapsed before he would show his pupil the famous painting of Apelles. Giorgios closed his eyes as if blinded. It seemed to him as if rays of deathless light jutted forth out of this work, and like a very god, ever young and vigorous and fair, the shape and features of the great conqueror of two thousand years ago shone out and looked at him from the background of darkling gold.

"Copy the painting," said Parrhasios: "thou art the only man worthy and able to do it."

A sheet of strong canvas was procured, and this was ground down and covered with genuine gold, put on with an oily varnish. And on this stratum Giorgios, following the directions of his instructor, began to outline the figure of the hero in thin colors. With a delicacy and accuracy of touch truly miraculous, the young man reproduced, trait for trait, tint for tint, the masterwork of Apelles, so that to the uninitiated there was, when finished, not an iota of difference to be discovered.

"And now I have no more to teach thee," spoke Parrhasios, and shook hands with his pupil. "Go and live by thyself, in thine own cell, and take thine admirable copy along. Go, and the saints be with thee!"

And thus the master bade farewell to the pupil, who now erected a rude cabin for himself in a deserted clearing, where the sun's power was broken by surrounding trees and a clear spring spread freshness. He now thought of but one thing,—flight. Only at night was he at liberty to make his preparations, for during the daytime his small hut was forever crowded by the friars from round about, who thronged to see the precious copy, since they could not view the original.

At last he was ready. It was a clear, cool night, when the stars shone in mild radiance. He had everything with him, even to his copy of Apelles, carefully wrapped. So he wandered on and on, through vales and by steep rocks, shunning trodden paths, and taking the stars for sole guide, ever in the direction of the world and freedom, toward the isthmus. The night passed, and the young day dawned. Giorgios hid in a deep thicket and slept all through the hours until the veil of darkness once more was spreading itself over all. He had dreamt of golden liberty and of undying fame.

Again the fugitive left his hiding and wandered forth. Clouds appeared in the sky and wiped out the light of the stars, and a rough wind whistled through the forest. Lightning began to play overhead, but the lonely youth heeded it not. Onward, onward! And now a bank of black, ominous clouds moved up and covered the whole sky, and the peals of thunder became deafening. The fury of nature was unloosened, and around him lightning shot like fiery tongues. But Giorgios went on.

Suddenly a broad, white band of fire seemed to fall from heaven and right in his path. Giorgios lost his senses and sank to the earth.

When he awoke, night reigned, black, starless night. He painfully groped his way, but he bruised himself against trees and stumbled over roots and rocks. There was nothing left for him but to await the morning. Thus he sat for many hours; but the sun would not rise. A horrible doubt flashed through his mind. At the same time he heard his name called near him, heard voices in his immediate neighborhood. Still he saw nothing. All about him was dark. They lifted him up and led him back to the monastery. A flash of lightning had rendered him blind.

Wolf von Schierbrand.

HEROINES, PAST AND PRESENT.

IN the good old times, not so remote but that most of us can remember them, and good because past and therefore seen through the enchanting haze of memory, the hair of the heroine played an important part. For one thing, it came down with surprising facility, apparently without cause, except that she had a good opportunity to display her wondrously beautiful tresses.

As a matter of course, her hair was luxuriant. None of the other women in that particular book had hair worthy of comparison with

hers, which fell in great waves far below her waist, whether purple-black, dusky, nut-brown, or the red gold such as Titian loved to paint.

If the heroine went out for a ride, the horses usually ran away. (One might almost think that the faithful animals had had instructions as to what was expected of them.) In her efforts to control the frightened creatures, just as they dashed by a group of her friends and admirers or rushed past the hero, down swept her hair in great inky masses to her knees.

If she went out for a canter, her steed became frisky, and her rich auburn hair, escaping the confines of net and comb,—without making much fuss about it, either,—fell about her in sweet confusion, or floated behind her on the breeze.

If she were a lady of high degree, robbed of her lover by an irate husband or a stern father, she threw herself upon the breast of him who had loved her but too well, as he lay gasping away his life,—and of course her hair came down, though apparently fastened securely in place one little hour ago; the riotous masses of her copper-colored locks covered him like a shroud.

If she were a maiden of lowly birth, it made no difference. Pretty, coy little Babette, the fisherman's daughter, has been forbidden to speak to Lord Ronald or to think of him; she must tear his image from her heart. One day she is walking along the sands, mournfully gazing seaward. The tide, the treacherous tide, creeps in little by little until she is cut off from the shore. She does not return to her home at the accustomed time. But after a week has dragged by, the cruel waves bring to the shore a young maiden, with her shimmering golden hair floating about her.

Now, what made their hair come down so easily? How did they manage it?

The result was the same, whether the Honorable Mrs. Cholmondeley affected an elaborate waterfall, or Lady Majoribanks wore her tresses in a coronet on the top of her aristocratic head, or poor little Babette gathered her sun-bright hair into two long plaits. The waterfall fell, the braids unbraided, at the critical moment.

Not so long ago I knew a girl who had two long golden-brown braids; but they would never, never come down, not even when she was thrown from her horse or fell from a cherry-tree. Her hair never became riotous, nor could her hair-pins be induced to forsake her.

Recently there has been a change. The heroine's hair does not come down as frequently as in the past. After giving the subject serious thought, I have come to the conclusion that this is due not so much to the present low price of hair-pins, which places them within the reach of all, as to the fashion of wearing the hair that has prevailed during the last few years. Imagine how the heroine would look with a wavy section on either side of her head and her back hair as straight as a Japanese doll's! Nowadays her tresses content themselves with rippling back from her shell-like ears, while the wind lifts the light curls from her white brow, or caresses a stray lock that has fallen lovingly against her snowy neck.

The heroine was usually beautiful in the good old days. Indeed,

it is surprising how many beautiful people, how many handsome, pretty, or good-looking people, appeared in the dear and wonderful book-world. Almost every one set up a claim to good looks of one sort or another. It was as if the novelist, with riches, titles, beauty, all within his reach to scatter lavishly, had not the heart to create a really ugly face. At any rate, on the rare occasions when he did so he made the ugliness so attractive that the other people in the book marvelled at that person's fascination, and even the beauties paled in the light of her subtle charm.

Besides this type of heroine, who made no pretensions to mere physical beauty, there was another, still more alluring. Some people said she was too short: others said she was of an adorable height. She was too pale: no, her color was delicately lovely. She had great, dark, soulful eyes: her eyes lacked expression. In short, she was not this, and she was not that. Still, in spite of the fact that she had a nervous twitching at the corner of her mouth, or winked half a dozen times where an ordinary mortal winks but once, she was charming. The men in the book all thought her beautiful, though the women—who did not like her—wondered at their absurd admiration for that creature who really hadn't a feature. Besides, the novelist said she was beautiful, and ought not he to know?

But times have changed. The heroine is now often decidedly plain. Even her creator does not try to hide the fact. Sometimes her hair is red, pure and simple, though once it was like burnished copper; or her milk-white skin is blemished by freckles. I have actually known of her being short and inclined to stoutness, instead of resembling the slender, sylph-like creature of old. But as yet the novelist has not seen fit to deprive her of that mysterious something which makes her beyond all other people irresistibly attractive.

The heroine used to be very fond of going about heavily veiled. Sometimes she wore a brown, sometimes a blue, or even a thick green, veil. Yet she looked charming in any of these, such was her air of distinction and her beauty of figure. In spite of her mask, the hero never failed to recognize her. Though he could not see her face, he felt sure that she was young and lovely, and only one woman in the world had such a carriage as that.

The heroine, particularly the English heroine, can also look sweetly pretty in a simple frock of gray linen. This, however, is a small feat compared with that of her who appeared in a gown of some white, soft, fuzzy, tufted stuff,—the novelist himself seemed ashamed to say outright that it was Turkish towelling,—with black velvet at the wrists, and knots of it here and there, a plain silver belt around her slender waist, and a heavy necklace of the same metal about her neck. The author apologetically explained that this costume was a little experiment in dress. But I have no doubt that the heroine was radiant in it. For she is the only woman in the world who can make her old gown look better than the new frocks of others, simply by putting fresh frills at her throat and wrists.

Poor, pretty, and proud, the heroine watches the other girls while they don their silks or airy muslins, and bemoans her sad fate in

having to wear her shabby old gown to Lady Nugent's dinner. The sly minx! Does she not know that she has but to have her thick fair hair done up in a coronet, and to brighten her dingy brown merino with knots of crimson here and there, to eclipse them all? Does she not know that then the men will all crowd about her chair, and that even Lady Gwendolen, the earl's lovely daughter, will be neglected?

In her ability to look beautiful with so little effort and at so small a cost, the heroine of the past achieved a task as difficult as that accomplished by the type of hero who, as any one could see, was a gentleman. He had a red face, carrot-colored hair, and small blue eyes; he was short and stout, or insignificant-looking. His conversation smacked of the kennels and stables, and very often was enlivened by profanity in the presence of ladies. Every one knew that he drank more than was good for him, that he gambled and betted, that he did not pay his debts. Yet, while they admitted that he was not good-looking, that he was even plain, all the women in the book declared that any one could see that Sir Harry was a gentleman. But this is a digression.

Many changes have crept in. Time was when, if sorrows rolled over her like billows and one misfortune followed on the heels of another, the heroine was permitted to glide into merciful unconsciousness or went into a death-like trance. Nowadays, however, no matter how harrowing the calamity, she is obliged to grin and bear it, like the rest of us. The novelist no longer considerately draws a veil when he comes to an unusually difficult piece of writing. Perhaps he has learned that he cannot now successfully shirk his task with the plea that to say more would be profanation,—that he will not be the one to lay bare the secrets of that stricken heart. In these degenerate days he plunges in the knife with fiendish glee, regardless of the sufferings of the victim, of himself, or of the public. Nor does he rest until the ghastly task of vivisection is complete.

The heroine, you may have observed, rarely says anything at present, though she manages to do the lion's share of talking. She does not answer; she does not reply; she seldom retorts. No, she flutters, she flashes back, she breathes, when she wishes to give utterance to her thoughts. If she is in an exultant mood, she glories, instead of exclaiming. But let us console ourselves. She no longer habitually says Nay instead of No.

Yet "Alas for the good old times!" say I. For with them, I fear, has departed the ormolu clock. It stood on the mantel-shelf in the heroine's boudoir. I have seen grandfathers' clocks, cuckoo clocks, onyx clocks, Dresden china clocks, but never an ormolu clock, though once as common as beauty and titles. It never did anything so vulgar as to strike. You remember it, do you not, the little ormolu clock that musically chimed out the hours?

Nina R. Allen.

Books of the Month.

Economic Entomology. By John B. Smith, Sc.D., Professor of Entomology in Rutgers College, etc.

the writer of this notice saw during the present season a rich crop of oats vanish in a few days before the march of the army worm, and news of its depredations has come from all sides, with lament for losses as bitter as any known to modern enterprise. But this is only a single one of the multitude of destructive insects with which the farmer must do battle. He runs the risk of weather, of sterility, and of theft in field and orchard, and brings up a handsome crop in which his welfare is centred, only to see it disappear before the onset of the potato-bug or the asparagus-beetle, the grape-worm or the apple-borer. The harm done seems so wanton, the instrument of destruction is so minute, that a remedy would appear to be in the order of nature; but it is often not so at all. The pest is a very modern one, and science has not sufficiently codified its views to be always effective.

It is to supply, as far as contemporary thought and contrivance can do so, a specific for the evil of insect pests that *Economic Entomology* has been prepared by Professor John B. Smith, Sc.D., and published by J. B. Lippincott Company. The work takes up the entire subject in an exhaustive manner, practically, theoretically, and scientifically, and is, so far as we know, the first attempt thus far made to systematize the science of Economic Entomology. It will therefore take a standard place in every agriculturist's library, and will enable him to save much that is menaced, as well as to prevent the propagation of the devouring insects. Many cuts of the varied species, with examples of their evil work, are embodied in the text, and a more complete and useful volume devoted to the interests of farming it would be difficult to produce.

The Spas and Mineral Waters of Europe. By Hermann Weber, M.D., F.R.C.P., and F. Parkes Weber, M.D., M.R.C.P.

From the enormous exodus of tourists to Europe each year it is patent that, while many go for relaxation or pleasure, a large number seek health from the curative waters and stimulating climates of the old country. To these, and to such as have not yet discovered the beneficent value of balneo-therapeutic treatment, is addressed the volume—Lippincott's,—under notice, a shapely and convenient book of nearly four hundred pages, adapted for travelling, or for the invalid's table or library. It has been prepared by the competent hands of Dr. Hermann Weber, M.D., F.R.C.P., who is a member of many learned bodies and an eminent European specialist on the subject, and of Dr. F. Parkes Weber, M.D., M.R.C.P., an able coadjutor.

The plan of the work is a clear and reasonable one, admitting of easy reference to the various branches of the subject, and the treatment of these covers with sufficient comprehensiveness all that need be known by the layman, or by the physician who desires to use the book as a directory of resorts and of doctors. The curative qualities of the different waters are fully set down, and the diseases most benefited by each are carefully stated; while a brief but ample notion of

towns, railway facilities, accommodations, physicians, and climate is given in very direct terms.

The Eye and its Care. By Frank Allport, M.D.

Of much original value is this excellent little volume called *The Eye and its Care*, by Frank Allport, M.D., just put forth by the J. B. Lippincott Company, and intended not for practitioners, but for the layman and for schools.

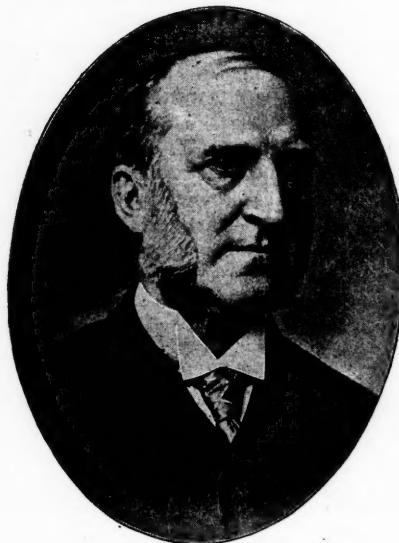
It is a great desideratum in our contemporary life of daily drive and overwork that we should know more about the organs of our bodies which most suffer under the extreme pressure. Ignorant misuse of the eye brings severe punishment to its neglectful or uninformed possessor; but unless some such book as this is put in his hand, it is difficult to conceive how he is to be warned of his folly.

Dr. Allport comes to his work with ripe experience and scientific training. He is the Professor of Ophthalmology in the Minnesota State University, and a member of many of the learned bodies of Minnesota. He has discovered earlier than his fellows the need of such a text-book as this, which has long been a patent necessity to patients, and his little book will be welcomed for its clear statements about the eye, its structure, its treatment, its limitations, and its uses, with the distinct object in view of perpetuating good eyesight for present and future generations. The dedication to Dr. Charles A. Oliver is a deserved compliment to an eminent associate.

A Tame Surrender.
By Captain Charles King. **The Golden Fleece.** By Julian Hawthorne. Last issues of the Lotos Library.

The Lotos Library, in which the Lippincotts have recently issued some of their best novelettes, has proved a striking success. This is due as much to the singularly attractive appearance of the little volumes which compose the Library as to the literary standard maintained throughout its numbers. The cover color is pale orange decorated in rich green tones, and the internal features are no less dainty than the outside gives promise of.

In the Lotos Library have appeared such widely read stories as *A Professional Beauty* and *A Social Highwayman*, and these are now followed by two of equal interest by authors whose books are always eagerly read. Captain Charles King and Julian Hawthorne are names to conjure with. The former contributes *A Tame Surrender*, the latter *The Golden Fleece*, to the Lotos Library. Captain King's tale deals with the great Chicago strike of 1893, and is a mélange of love and intrigue, war and socialism, such as this most agreeable of story-tellers alone can turn out. His hero is Captain Forrest, who falls in love with Miss Allison and marries her in spite of the falsehoods of Mr. Elmendorf, rival and a wily socialist. Julian Hawthorne's is a story of ghostly quality, dealing with the lost treasures of a princely family of ancient Mexico. The blood of the noble Aztecs flows down to our times through the veins of their princess, Miriam Trednoke. She gives her heart to a practical American engineer, whom she rescues at a crisis, and they live contentedly on the vast treasure they mutually bring to light.



Chauncey M. Depew

WRITES :

GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT,
December 16, 1895.

EISNER & MENDELSON CO.

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Ask for the genuine

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AUSTRIAN DUELING.—Continental militarism exercises its terrorism even within its own armed circles. Offended honor can only be satisfied by the duel with weapons and to conclusions regulated according to the nature of the insult. The duel is nowadays rigidly enforced, and reports very often appear telling of compulsory sabre fights between cadets and "volunteers" in their teens, who had amicably settled their school-boy disputes, yet, notwithstanding, had to carry out this barbaric procedure. The War Minister himself supports the custom. Fatal terminations are of common and startling occurrence; and from Hungary came the tale the other day of a reserve artillery officer who had been deprived of his commission because in a merciful spirit he had arranged with his antagonist—the dispute being previously settled—that no bullets be put in the pistols. As far back as 1780, Emperor Josef II. denounced in writing the Austrian system of duelling as "a barbarous practice, suited only for the days of Tamerlane." But as long as the militarism endures, the rules of duelling will remain as ruthless and inviolable as ever, the merciful opinions of emperors to the contrary notwithstanding.—*Speaker.*

BOSTON proposes to have the largest hotel structure in the world, at a cost of something over three million dollars.

POWDERED FLUOR-SPAR HELPS X RAYS.—Professor Winkelmann and Dr. Straubel, of the University of Jena, have succeeded in discovering a new method of photographing with Röntgen rays, by which the length of exposure is reduced from ten or fifteen minutes to only a few seconds. The method is based on a conversion of the X rays into rays of other undulations by means of fluor-spar crystal. If the Röntgen rays are allowed to fall upon a photographic plate the sensitized film of which is turned away from them and covered with fluor-spar, the rays, after passing the film, will be absorbed by the fluor-spar, and there undergo the modification spoken of. The new rays now act upon the photographic plate, and, indeed, much more strongly than did the Röntgen rays on passing through. As large fluor-spar plates are to be had with difficulty, powder of the same crystal was tried in their place, and, as this succeeded, nothing stands in the way of the further application of the method. The new rays emitted by the fluor-spar were minutely examined by the discoverers. They succeeded in determining the frangibility, and from this the length, of the undulations. The rays lie far beyond the ultra-violet end of the visible spectrum.—*London Daily News.*

HOW THE GULF IS FILLING UP.—In the years to come the geographies will make no mention of the Gulf of Mexico, but will picture an immense tract of lowland in its stead, the map being probably provided with a foot-note something like this: "Note.—There is a tradition that this level tract of swamp land was once a billowy sea several hundred miles long, embracing all that country between Mexico and Cuba on the west and east and Yucatan and Louisiana on the south and north." This state of affairs is being gradually but surely brought about by the Mississippi and other United States rivers, which annually deposit millions of tons of sediment in the gulf's bottom. Expert hydrographers declare that the Mississippi alone annually deposits mud sufficient in the gulf to cover one square mile of its bottom to a thickness of two hundred and forty feet.—*St. Louis Republic.*



“A sailor's wife, a sailor's joy should be,”

Yo - ho , Yo - ho !

But when he does the work at sea

His aid, like hers, is sure to be

Sap-o,li-o!

**CLEANS
SCOURS
POLISHES**

A FORMIDABLE FISH.—Dr. Frolich tells about a sucker first found in the Nile and its tributaries by modern scientific men in 1881, but well known to the Egyptians as the sucker thunderer god, being worshipped as such in a sucker-god temple in the city of the thunder-sucker, or Oryrrhynchos. The reason they called it the thunder-sucker, instead of the thunder-fish, was because they knew of another fish, known to the English-speaking people as the electric cat (fish), and to the Germans as the Zitterwels. It grows to a length of about a foot, of which the head and nose take up a quarter, and at the deepest part measures more than a quarter of its length. A peculiar thing about the various electrical fish is that should one swim even at a considerable distance from a human bather the bather would know of its proximity by an electrical sensation, while many of them have batteries actually fit to kill a horse on contact.—*Information.*

A "WALKING MOUNTAIN" in Gard, France, is said to be moving towards the river of that name at the rate of fifteen feet a day, its lower strata—grit and green marl—having given way. It advances with prodigious noise and cracking of the earth.

ARGON.—Though unique in its chemical inactivity, it would be premature to conclude that argon may not form compounds under conditions yet untried and that it is an absolutely "idle" and useless thing. Professor Roberts-Austen suggests that it may possibly play a part in certain metallurgical operations in which air is largely employed. In making Bessemer steel, for instance, not less than one hundred thousand cubic feet of air are blown through each charge of metal, for the purpose of removing the carbon, silicon, phosphorus, and other impurities. In this air there must be over one thousand cubic feet of argon. Now, Professor Roberts-Austen has found by experiment that the nitrogen which can be pumped out of Bessemer-blown metal, and which is twice the volume of the metal, contains little or no argon; and the question arises whether the argon may not have united with the iron, as nitrogen undoubtedly does, and confer upon Bessemer steel some of the peculiarities which distinguish it from other steel. It is, of course, possible, and perhaps more likely, that the argon passes through the molten metal without combining with it; but the suggestion is an interesting one and well worth experimental examination.

Further, it may prove that argon is in some way taken up by plants and contributes in an important manner to their nourishment and growth; although the attempts to extract argon from vegetable and animal substances have thus far yielded negative results. As is well known, plants are unable to take nitrogen directly from the air, but obtain it from nitrogenous compounds which are absorbed in solution by their roots. The air is, however, the original source of these compounds, as well as of all other naturally occurring nitrogenous substances, most of which are produced by the life-activity of micro-organisms, and from the natural substances all chemical compounds containing nitrogen are prepared.—*Popular Science Monthly.*

PROFESSOR E. MACHE, of Prague, is credited with some remarkable achievements in the line of rapid photography. Thus, the flight of a projectile has been fastened on a sensitive plate, the exposure being estimated at probably about one-thousandth of a second.

The New Life Giver.

The Original Oxydonor "Victory" for Self-Treatment. Supplies Oxygen to the blood, and cures disease and pain under Nature's own laws. Applied as in illustration.

DR. H. SANCHE'S Oxydonor "Victory"



Indisputable Evidence . . .

"DR. H. SANCHE: *Dear Sir*.—I have investigated some of your testimonials in every part of the country. I intended to establish both the genuineness of the letters and also whether the writers had in any wise changed their opinions as to the merits of your revitalizer. Although some of the testimonials were three and four years old, as published in your pamphlet, I received responses from every party written to, and, without exception, the original testimonial was endorsed. This I consider a very remarkable thing, and, apart from the faith I felt roused in me upon reading your words, I became assured that here there must be something true and effective. I made these inquiries with regard to my mother, who has been suffering for some years back, and has been incapacitated from all effort.

"Yours truly, J. DORRNER, C.E."

The Animarium—an Institution for the treatment of the sick by this method—now open for patients. Send for terms.

Large book of information and latest price-list mailed free.

DR. H. SANCHE, Discoverer and Inventor,
261 Fifth Ave., New York. 61 Fifth St. cor. Fort, Detroit, Mich.

An expert advertiser, on being urged to say how he would attract attention to the merits of the mutual system practised by The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, used these words :

"Look at it! It is nothing more or less than a good many persons putting their little moneys together, and letting the few who die take out big moneys. That is, there are no antagonistic interests.

"If it be true that full justice pays in business where the interests of buyer and seller lie on different sides of the counter, what is true of a club of people whose very purpose in clubbing together is to be protected by one another? Nobody objects to a *little* more than full justice there. It is always a popular measure to strain the bargain a *trifle* in the interest of *one* at the cost of the club, especially if that *one* be unfortunate."

All of which may be good advertising; it may be attractive and command business in certain lines. It addresses itself unmistakably to the one who wants some advantage and is indifferent who pays, and of such is the kingdom of trade, but not of life insurance. The essential thing is justice, not charity, not generosity, not left-handed beneficence had at the expense of right; and it is not in keeping with right morals in life insurance to give one member more than is fairly his, even though it be a *trifle*. There is no such thing as being half right and half wrong at the same time. Righteousness and robbery do not mix. They are as incongruous as invoking a blessing on a war-ship designed for murder. No!

"Appropriate justice sorts each shape and hue,
And gives to each the exact proportion due."

High ideal, you say. Well, it is only by aiming higher than we achieve that progress in right is made. That man may be trusted who always seeks to conform his conduct to right principles; and that company may be trusted which always aims at justice.

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WAGNER MADE HIS LIVING.—It is true that in his early years Wagner's earnings were very small, but when he had made a name for himself he was able to command very substantial sums. He sold the copyright—not the performing right—of his "Parsifal" for about nine thousand pounds, which was perhaps the largest sum ever paid to a composer for a single opera, while for the four dramas in "Der Ring des Nibelungen" he was paid two thousand pounds. From the American ladies who wished an orchestral march for a centenary celebration he obtained a little over one thousand pounds; and it is calculated that his regular income during the last years of his life was about five thousand pounds per annum. With all this, Wagner was very often in difficulties, but he explained the matter himself when he said, "By nature I am luxurious, prodigal, extravagant, much more than Sardanapalus and all the old Emperors put together."—*Chambers's Journal*.

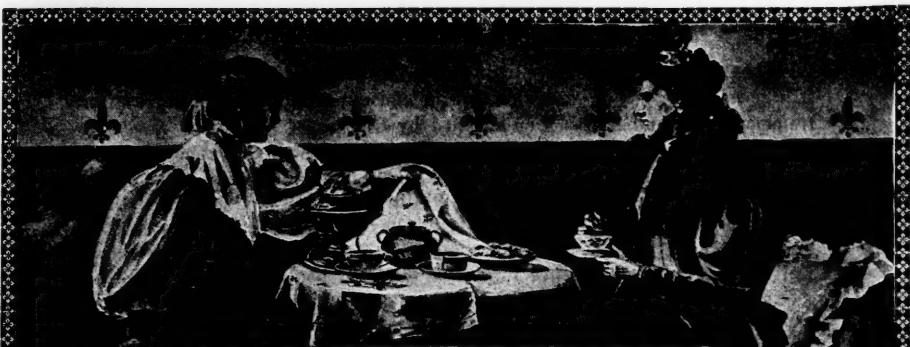
INVENTORS' STUMBLING-BLOCKS.—Papin, a Frenchman, invented the digester for paper-making and many other purposes, and also the lever safety-valve. In 1807 he made a small steamboat and ran it on the Fulda River. The ignorant boatmen seized it and destroyed it.

When Jonathan Hulls patented his steamboat, in England, in 1736, he was made an object of general ridicule. One paper published this doggerel:

Jonathan Hulls,
With his patent skulls,
Invented a machine
To go against wind and stream;
But he, being an ass,
Couldn't bring it to pass,
And so was ashamed to be seen.

POOR KILLING.—It is usual to compare the battles of the last century with the battles of to-day, and to dilate upon the greater deadliness of the modern weapons and the modern results. But the facts are all the other way. At Fontenoy, for instance, one volley of the Coldstreams struck down four hundred and fifty Frenchmen of the Régiment du Roi. Again, at the same battle, the Gardes du Corps had not much short of five hundred saddles emptied by a single volley, while the French Guards were scattered by a point-blank volley from British regiment at twenty paces that brought down four hundred and fifty men. Here we have at Krügersdorp thousands of Boers in cover shooting for hours on two days at six hundred Englishmen in the open, and killing very few compared to the hundreds who dropped at one volley from the Coldstreams at Fontenoy.

The fact is that modern fighting tends more and more to become a game of long bowls. This was the cause of the small execution done at Krügersdorp. On the other hand, our forefathers at Fontenoy and elsewhere held their fire till they were within twenty or thirty paces, and the officers passed their canes along the musket-barrels, to make sure they were not aimed too high, before the volley was delivered. Moreover, the men were formed in solid column or square, and every shot told. It looks as if the greater range of the rifle would be followed by less loss of men, and certainly the rapidity of the discharge of the magazine rifle tends to encourage wild and careless shooting, and is against cool and accurate marksmanship.—*Saturday Review*.



A Matter of Pride

—the dainty whiteness and freshness of your embroidered linen. To keep it so all its life, launder with COPCO only. It is a delicate soap for delicate uses. Removes coffee and tea stains easily, preserves the linen, keeps the colors fresh.

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In everything which makes Life Insurance perfectly safe and moderate in cost, and in liberality to policy-holders, the Provident is unsurpassed.

THE END OF KNOWLEDGE.—Some men think that the gratification of curiosity is the end of knowledge; some, the love of fame; some, the pleasure of dispute; some, the necessity of supporting themselves by their knowledge; but the real use of all knowledge is this,—that we should dedicate that reason which was given us by God to the use and advantage of man.—BACON.

HEART-BURIALS.—The body of Louis IX. after his death at Carthage in 1270 is related to have been boiled in wine and water in order to preserve it for transportation, and it was then shipped by Charles of Anjou (I.) to Sicily. Here the flesh and viscera were deposited in the Benedictine abbey of Monreale, near Palermo. The heart and the bones remained, by desire of the soldiers, in the camp. Later, his son Philip (le Hardi) having carried them and those of his brother Tristan into Italy, they were brought to Paris in 1271. On March 21 of that year the bones, reduced to ashes, were deposited temporarily in Notre Dame, whence they were presently borne in state to the Benedictine abbey of St.-Denis, and at each spot by the way where the bearers paused, seven in number, Philip subsequently caused a cross to be raised.

Charles of Anjou dying at Foggia, 1285, his heart was sent to Angers, while his body was entombed in San Gennaro, at Naples. His viscera remained in the Duomo at Foggia.

Philip III. (le Hardi) died of pestilence at Perpignan, October 5, 1285. His flesh was buried at Narbonne. His bones were transferred to St.-Denis. His heart was given by Philip IV. (le Bel) to the Dominicans of Paris.—*Notes and Queries.*

HITHERTO gutta-percha has usually been obtained by cutting down a tree. But it is now found that a less ruinous method may be employed. Gum extracted from the leaves is said to be purer and more abundant than that taken from the tree-trunk.

FOUND THE CAP OF THE SPHINX.—There is no end to the "finds" in Egypt. It has hitherto always been believed that as much was known about the Sphinx as could be known; but now Colonel Roum, an American, by digging round the base, has brought some very curious facts to light. At the back of the figure was found a shaft twenty-five feet deep, with two passages running out of it at the bottom. More important was the discovery of the long-lost cap of the Sphinx, which was found fifteen feet below the surface of the little temple or shrine between the paws. The cap is painted red, and is adorned with the three lotus columns and the serpent. As the hole in the top of the head of the Sphinx, into which the cap was fastened, is still undamaged, the cap should be restored to its place. We hope that Colonel Roum's next find will be the fragments of the nose broken off by an Arab iconoclast some five hundred years ago. If these could be recovered, and the nose restored, the Sphinx would be "the father of terrors" no longer, and we might see that look of benign calm which delighted the ancient world, and made the Greek poet speak of the Sphinx as "great Latona's servant, mild and bland."—*Spectator.*

RAN NO RISKS.—The boy hung back when the visitor spoke to him, and his mother was naturally annoyed.

"Won't you go to Mrs. Brown, Willie?" she asked.

"No," replied the boy, shortly.

"Don't you like me?" asked Mrs. Brown, good-naturedly.

"No, I don't," answered the boy.

"Why, Willie!" exclaimed his mother, reproachfully.

"Well, I guess I got whipped for not telling the truth yesterday, and I ain't taking no chances to-day," protested the boy.—*Chicago Post.*



Little Folks' Lunches

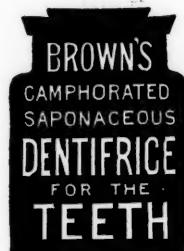
are an important subject—for little folks' appetites are always large. To lay the foundation for future good digestion, use

Cottolene

in your kitchen. It makes dainty dishes wholesome, and wholesome dishes dainty and appetizing. Cottolene is sold everywhere with trade marks—"Cottolene" and steer's head in cotton-plant wreath—on every tin.

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TO CLEANSE AND WHITEN THE TEETH,
TO REMOVE TARTAR FROM THE TEETH,
TO SWEETEN THE BREATH AND PRESERVE THE TEETH,
TO MAKE THE GUMS HARD AND HEALTHY,

USE BROWN'S CAMPHORATED SAPONACEOUS DENTIFRICE.

Price, Twenty-Five Cents a Jar.

For Sale by all Druggists.

YOUNG MOTHERS should early learn the necessity of keeping on hand a supply of Gail Borden Eagle Brand Condensed Milk for nursing babies as well as for general cooking. It has stood the test for thirty years, and its value is recognized.

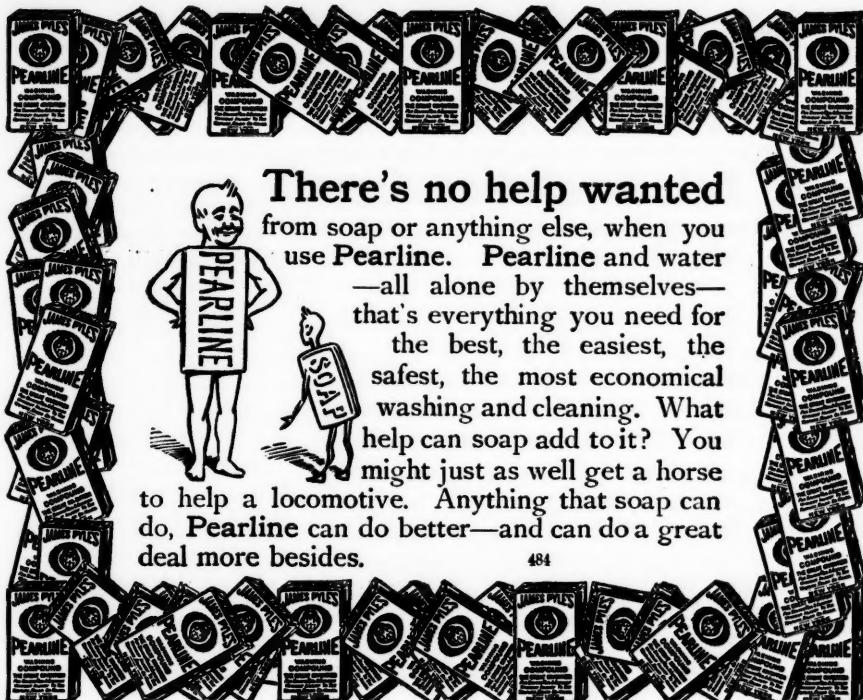
SALMON-FISHING FOR GAIN.—Salmon-fishing with the fly is no longer a purely royal sport, and the spirit of gain flaps her wings over the famous Bangor pool. For a long time it was accepted as a matter of course that a man must have one or two hundred dollars' worth of tackle and the benefit of several years' experience before he could hope to succeed as a salmon-fisherman. But this idea is exploded, and while the boy with an alder pole and a bent pin stands no chance of beating the experienced fisherman, as he has been doing in newspaper trout stories these many years, the bulk of the salmon no longer fall into the boats of the rich sportsmen. River men now fish for market with ordinary fly rods and tackle, and when they land a twenty- or twenty-five pounder, which sells quickly for a dollar a pound, as all salmon do early in the season, the business is found to be very profitable. A fishing team consists of two men in a boat. The craft must be wide and steady enough to admit a low chair, to be occupied by the man who casts the fly. The other man handles the boat, which is no mean task in the "strong" water on the fishing-ground. The visiting angler, of course, has a boat and boatman always at his command, but those of moderate means, who are not too proud to sell their catch at the market, fish on shares, and the two men alternate in the two capacities named.—*Lewiston (Maine) Journal*.

GROWTH IN SICKNESS.—Recently a fourteen-year-old girl died in New Brighton. It is said that when she became ill she measured five feet two inches. She was sick three weeks, and when she died and was laid out for interment she measured five feet nine inches, having grown seven inches in three weeks. It is said that the change in her appearance was so great that neighbors viewing the remains could scarcely recognize in them the features of their little friend of three weeks before. Doctors say it is the most remarkable case they have any knowledge of.—*Philadelphia Times*.

ABOUT ENCORES.—Sims Reeves is hard on what he calls the "vicious encore system." He characterizes it as a preposterous piece of dishonesty, of which all honest persons should be ashamed. The nuisance, he says rightly, seeks to take a shabby advantage of the suffering professional; and it is to be regretted that few of our performers possess sufficient courage to return to the platform, bow politely, and indicate firmly, No! Your encore-monger cares nothing about symmetry, or balance, or cohesiveness, whether the occasion be the lyric stage, the oratorio performance, the benefit and ordinary concert, or the ballad concert.

He wants to hear more than he has bargained for, and if his demand is not yielded to he will hoot and bray and hiss, when an attempt is made to perform the next piece, as if he belonged to the long-eared quadrupeds or feathered biped tribe. And then we have occasionally what the newspapers term "a scene,"—an exhibition of "'Arryism" that disgraces our boasted civilization. If managers, artists, and the musical public would but think this matter over and determine to stamp out the nuisance, one great blot on our English musical performances might be effaced. Unfortunately, it is not yet quite certain whether encores are more distasteful to the great majority of performers than they are to a large section of the concert-going public.—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

ONE pound of cork is said to be amply sufficient to support a man of ordinary size in the water.



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TEETHING

For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.
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has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING, with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS the GUMS, ALLAYS all PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHEA. Sold by Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for **Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup**, and take no other kind.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A BOTTLE.

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WHAT DOES SHE WANT?—Within the past forty years woman has demanded of man much that he has graciously granted her. She wanted equality with him, and it has been given her in all things for which she is fitted, and which will not lower the high standard of womanhood that he desires for her. This she accepts without relinquishing any of the chivalrous attentions which man always bestows upon her. The new woman tells us that "an ounce of justice is of more value to woman than a ton of chivalry." But when she obtains her "ounce of justice," she apparently still makes rigorous demands that her "ton of chivalry" be not omitted. Woman asked to work by man's side and on his level; and to-day she has the chance of so doing. The fields of knowledge and opportunity have been opened to her; and she still "desires that of which her grandmother did not dream," because, like an overindulged child, so long as she is denied one privilege, that privilege she desires above all others. She has decided that without the ballot she can do nothing, for in her vocabulary ballot is synonymous with power.—*Forum*.

A PRETTY ENGLISH BULL.—The following was quoted in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* the other night: "Looking back along the trackless pathways of the future, he descried the footstamps of an invisible hand."—*Spectator*.

DID THE ROMANS SMOKE?—Coltsfoot, or the leaves of the lettuce, being slightly narcotic, would form a harmless make-believe for the good folk who persuade themselves that they could not sleep a wink were they deprived of their evening comfort. Ages ago both Greeks and Romans, according to Dioscorides and Pliny, found comfort in smoking through a reed or pipe the dried leaves of coltsfoot, which relieved them of old coughs and difficult breathing. We can picture the legionary in Britain's bleak atmosphere, while pacing the Roman wall, trying to console himself in his lonely vigil with the vapor from his "elphim pipe," fragments of which have been found among the ruins of those early memorials to the Scots' persistent determination to travel southward.

And as to the lettuce, it has been famous since the time of Galen (Claudius Galenus), who asserts that he found relief from sleeplessness by taking it at night. Regardless of these things, the nicotian epicure of to-day enjoys the inestimable advantage of luxuriating in the delicate aroma of the Cuban leaf, while fancying himself wafted on his upward way to Nirvana. The charming simplicity that leads to this ideal conception of existence is most refreshing; the being so lost to the outer world can hardly be blamed if he says rude things when compelled to touch mother earth.—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

HAUD ON A WEE.—The enthusiasm of curlers is well known. While King Frost holds sway, every terrestrial consideration gives way to the "roarin' game."

The wife of a devotee was on her death-bed, and she feebly muttered to her husband,—

"I dinna think I'll last till the mornin', Willie."

Willie approached the couch of the dying woman, and said, earnestly,—

"Haud on, Maggie, ma woman, haud on a wee, wi' a' yer micht an' main, jist for anither day. I'm tae be skip o' oor club at the bonspiel the morn, an' it winna look weel for me tae be on the ice if ye're a corp, ye ken."—*Pearson's Weekly*.

MADAM: We take the liberty of calling your attention to our Floating-Borax Soap, believing that a trial will show you its great value for toilet, bath, or laundry use. It is not an imitation of anything, but is better than all other floating soaps, as it is absolutely pure. We do not aim to follow, but to lead. No doubt you know the value of Borax, in the bath or laundry. This soap, and Dobbins' Electric (which latter we have made for the last thirty years and still make), are the only soaps which really contain Borax, although some others claim to contain it, and as Dobbins' Electric stands at the head of the non-floating laundry soaps, so Floating-Borax stands far above all other floating soaps, and is without doubt the best floating soap that can possibly be made. Compare its color and odor with those of any other brand.

This soap when made is a pale cream color, but with age the Borax in it bleaches it to a pure white. Some floating soaps turn brown and rancid with age. We take pride in calling attention to the following certificate from the leading analytical chemists of this city:

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GENTLEMEN: We have carefully analyzed the sample of Dobbins' Floating-Borax Soap you sent us, and find it to contain fully five per cent. of Borax (Bi-Borate of Soda). It contains nothing injurious for use in the bath, toilet, or laundry. We find it free from all adulteration, and therefore certify to its purity.

Yours respectfully,

BOOTH, GARRETT & BLAIR.

We believe that you will be so pleased with this soap that you will desire to continue its use, in which case please order it of your grocer, and be sure that he gives you what you ask for.

It is the only floating soap whose wrappers are printed in red, hence it is impossible to mistake it for any other, even at a distance. Ask for **DOBBINS' FLOATING-BORAX SOAP, red wrapper.**

Yours respectfully,

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THE famous Canadian institution for the education of Young Ladies and Girls, Hellmuth Ladies' College, London, Canada, attracts students from all parts of America. It is a very excellent school and a lovely home. Its card appears in another page of this magazine.

THERE is no known agent that approaches Oxygen in stimulating and revitalizing effects. It absolutely expels disease from the system when rightly and scientifically supplied to it. The only safe method of evenly distributing it throughout the blood and circulation is through absorption by the pores of the skin from the atmosphere by the use of "Oxydonor Victory" made by Dr. Sanche, of Detroit, Michigan. The efficacy of this method is guaranteed by over forty years of successful study and practice and by thousands of cures of the most stubborn cases of all kinds of diseases. It is pleasant to use, and can, if desired, be applied during the hours of sleep. Its great value as a life-saver is attested by prominent people all over the world, whose testimony is beyond question.

A VERY interesting and valuable book entitled "Lee's Treatise on the Hair" has been recently published by the Lee Medicant Co., of 108 Fulton Street, New York. It contains much practical advice and many scientists' opinions upon its growth, care, and culture, and is distributed free upon request by its publishers.

BEGAN ALIKE, BUT ENDED DIFFERENTLY.—The tragedy of the sea that occurred between Singapore and the Carolines seems to surpass in horror the famous butchery of The Flowery Land. The *Maria II.* had an English captain and a Chinese crew, and the crew mutinied under the leadership of the boatswain. They murdered the captain, the mate, and a negro passenger, tied the bodies of the two officers to an anchor and threw it overboard, and then made prisoners of the captain's wife and child.

Next they fought among themselves, like the mutineers of the *Bounty*, and three more were sent after the captain and mate. The survivors steamed a course to the Pelew Islands, hoping, no doubt, to find a new Pitcairn. But they were overhauled by a Spanish cruiser on the way, and taken to Manila, where they now lie in jail.

What would have happened but for that Spanish cruiser? The *Bounty* men went at it with drink and the knife, until these and all other mischances thinned their numbers down to one. He turned pious, and founded the most perfect Christian community on all the broad earth. To this day it flourishes in primitive purity of faith, morals, and manners, on a speck of rock, and few crews that pass that way can resist the temptation to land and say their prayers.

—*London Daily News.*

IT is reported that two thousand patents have been taken out in this country on the manufacture of paper alone.

BURMESE WEAVING.—In the Burmese villages every house contains a loom, and on these are woven the really beautiful stuffs worn by the natives. Some of these materials are damasks of complicated patterns. The mystery of the "cards" and the Jacquard loom has never penetrated these primitive regions, and I found that close-patterned damasks of varied and brilliant colors were produced by the weaver's passing to and fro through the warp-threads tiny shuttles carrying weft. I counted once one hundred shuttles used on a silk damask twenty-four inches wide. I have witnessed few prettier examples of village and hand industries than seeing women and girls, gayly clad and chatting merrily, sit skeining and winding bright-colored silks under the palms and papayas of the woodland lanes of Amarapoora, or busy at the loom, weaving with deft fingers, by means of a hundred shuttles, under the shade of bamboo shelters set against the plaited walls of toy-like houses.

Work as hard as they may, the earnings of these willing and clever workers are but two annas a day,—that is, less than twopence.

Many months go by before an elaborate damask tamein is finished. On the pulleys of the loom may be often seen little bronze figures of nats or fairies, placed there to win the good offices of the guardian spirit, for, firm as may be the belief of the Burman in a pure Buddhism, he has not shaken off the older belief in spirits, fairies, and angels, good or bad.—*Cornhill Magazine.*

A NEW ANÆSTHETIC.—Dr. Pize, of Montélimar, France, has discovered a new anæsthetic. He has found that by injecting guaiacol under the skin in small doses, operations can be performed without pain. A committee appointed by the Academy of Medicine has inquired into the value of the discovery, and has congratulated Dr. Pize upon his achievement.—*Information.*

THE
CROWN PRINCE OF REXANIA.

BY

EDWARD S. VAN ZILE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MANHATTANERS," "THE LAST OF THE VAN SLACKS," ETC.

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